United Nations DP/2012/20

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services

Distr.: General
14 June 2012

Original: English

Second regular session 2012
4 to 10 September 2012, New York
Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Evaluation

Annual report on evaluation in UNDP 2011

Summary

The annual report on evaluation for 2011 assesses the progress made by the UNDP Evaluation Office, programme and policy units at UNDP headquarters, UNDP country offices and the evaluation units of the associated funds and programmes in fulfilling the evaluation function outlined in the UNDP evaluation policy. The report also presents key findings and lessons learned from independent evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office in 2011. The Evaluation Office programme of work for 2012 and 2013 is provided in the final part of the report.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to: (a) take note of the report; (b) request UNDP to address the issues raised by independent evaluations; (c) request UNDP to strengthen capacity for and use of decentralized evaluation; (d) request UNDP to support national evaluation capacity development; and (e) approve the revised programme of work for 2012 proposed by the Evaluation Office and the proposed programme of work for 2013.

12-37622 (E) 260612

Please recycle

Contents

Chapter		*Page*
I.	Background	3
II.	The evaluation function	3
	A. UNDP Evaluation Office	3
	B. United Nations Evaluation Group	6
	C. Associated funds and programmes	7
	D. Programme units	8
	E. Evaluation capacity	13
III.	Key findings and lessons learned from independent evaluations	14
	A. Meeting national priorities and development challenges	14
	B. Achieving programme goals	15
	C. Integration and promotion of gender, human rights and capacity development	15
	D. Improving programme and management efficiency	16
	E. Ensuring more sustainability in development results	17
IV.	Programme of work for the Evaluation Office for 2012-2013	17
	A. Approved programme of work 2012	17
	B. Proposed programme of work 2013	18
	Annex (*available on the Executive Board web page*)	

I. Background

1. The annual report on evaluation for 2011 is the sixth report submitted by the Evaluation Office of UNDP to the Executive Board since the UNDP evaluation policy was approved in 2006 and the second since the approval of the revised evaluation policy in February 2011 (decision 2011/3). The report assesses progress made by the Evaluation Office and the evaluation units of the associated funds and programmes in fulfilling the evaluation function outlined in the UNDP evaluation policy. It also presents an assessment of the evaluation capacity in the organization, evaluative evidence available for managing development results, and compliance in decentralized evaluation. The lessons emerging from independent evaluations are discussed, and the programme of work for 2012 and 2013 is presented (see section III) for Executive Board approval.

II. The evaluation function

A. UNDP Evaluation Office

Coverage

2. The Evaluation Office conducts independent evaluations of corporate, global, regional and country programme outcomes identified in the UNDP strategic plan and approved by the Executive Board. During 2010-2011, the Evaluation Office conducted eleven assessments of development results (ADRs) in Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, India, Liberia, Moldova, Nepal, Pacific island countries, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates. This report also covers three ADRs that were initiated in 2010 but finalized in 2011 for Brazil, Thailand and Tunisia, and one ADR for Egypt, due for finalization in 2011 that was delayed until 2012 pending formation of a new government.

3. The Evaluation Office conducted four thematic evaluations during 2011 that will be finalized in 2012 and will be reported in future annual reports on evaluation.[1]

Support to building a culture of evaluation in UNDP

4. Following approval of the revised evaluation policy, the Evaluation Office, in partnership with the Operations Support Group and the Capacity Development Group of the Bureau for Development Policy, has amended the *UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results* (PME Handbook)[2] and the Programme and Operations Policy and Procedures (POPP) to incorporate expanded guidance on evaluation compliance and planning.

5. The Evaluation Office has issued a companion guide to the PME Handbook for programme units and evaluators on the subject of UNDP outcome-level evaluation.[3] The companion guide is available on the UNDP website in English, French and Spanish. It provides detailed information, tools and templates on how to design and conduct outcome-level evaluations and how to involve partners. It also sets standards for the quality of outcome-level evaluations that are now being used to assess and rate decentralized evaluations. The Evaluation Office is also leading the development of an e-learning course on evaluation, to be made available via the UNDP Learning Resources Centre. The course, which is currently undergoing online testing, is primarily targeted at programme managers in UNDP country offices and aims to deepen their understanding of evaluation principles and methodology and their application when managing UNDP programmes and projects. It complements the PME Handbook, providing an additional learning tool for UNDP managers.

[1] The four evaluations included the following: UNDP contribution to strengthening electoral systems and processes; UNDP partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations; UNDP assistance to conflict-affected countries; and UNDP contribution to poverty reduction.

[2] See: PME Handbook

[3] See: UNDP Guidance on Outcome-level Evaluation

6. To help address the existing challenges in enhancing the quality and use of decentralized evaluations, as well as to improve the accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board, the Evaluation Office, in close collaboration with regional, policy and practice bureaux, has developed a *Quality Assessment Mechanism for Decentralized Evaluations*.[4] The tools and criteria contained therein draw on the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) *Norms for Evaluation in the United Nations System*,[5] the PME Handbook and its companion guide on outcome-level evaluation, as well as *Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects*.[6] These tools and criteria aim to enhance the quality standards of decentralized evaluations (for example, utility, clarity of objectives to all stakeholders, credibility, accuracy and reliability of evidence, transparency of judgements, and depth and clarity of reporting). The results of the quality assessment are presented in section D.

7. The Evaluation Office has established a new online evaluation expert roster with the regional bureaux and regional service centres, establishing a common platform that will consolidate various evaluation expert rosters and other parallel systems maintained by different programme units. The platform is based on standard criteria for vetting consultants and will provide UNDP staff with a single point of entry for accessing a wider pool of qualified consultants, facilitating cross-regional use of evaluation expertise. In 2011, the Evaluation Office knowledge network on evaluation, EvalNet, which has provided evaluation news and resources since 2001, was integrated with the new evaluation space on the UNDP Teamworks platform.

8. The Evaluation Office manages the publicly accessible online Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC).[7] The system includes evaluations conducted by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV). As of 1 March 2012, the ERC repository contained more than 2,100 evaluation-related documents posted by programme units.

9. The ERC is a repository for all UNDP evaluations, including those that UNDP carries out in agreement with specific funders – for instance, UNDP-implemented projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It is a requirement that all such evaluations be included in bureau and country office evaluation plans and posted in the ERC.

Resources

10. In 2011, the Evaluation Office received the same budget allocation as in 2010 from UNDP regular (core) funding for staff costs ($3.96 million) and evaluations ($3.78 million). Only $3.4 million, or 86 per cent, of the staff costs-related budget were disbursed, which was mainly a result of post vacancies during the second half of 2011. The total expenditure on evaluations and other corporate-related activities was $3.86 million, of which $3.3 million came from UNDP core funding and the remainder from other (non-core) sources: $383,000 from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation were allocated to evaluations, and $124,000 from the Government of Finland and $35,000 from the Government of Switzerland were allocated to the International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities.

11. The Evaluation Office continues to have 23 staff members (seventeen professional and six general service). Sixty-five per cent of all staff and 53 per cent of professional staff are women. The office faced a shortage of staff during the second half of 2011 following the departure of the Director, one evaluation specialist and one programme assistant.

Quality

12. The Evaluation Office continued to make efforts to further strengthen the quality of its evaluations and to improve quality assurance mechanisms. Further adjustments have been made to the ADR manual and ADR process guidance with a view to streamlining processes and improving efficiency. As a result,

[4] See Quality Assessment Mechanism for Decentralized Evaluations

[5] See: **Norms**: Norms for Evaluation in the United Nations System; **and Standards**: Standards for Evaluation on the United Nations System.

[6] See: UNDP-GEF Terminal Evaluation Guide

[7] See: Evaluation Resource Centre

there has been a significant improvement in the timeliness of ADRs. Following the standardization of the ADR approach in recent years, in 2012 the introduction of design flexibility has made it possible to adapt more easily to country-specific requirements and circumstances. With regard to quality assurance, the Evaluation Office has continued to contract at least one external advisor to review inception and draft ADR reports, in addition to assigning at least one internal Evaluation Office reviewer to each ADR. The Evaluation Office has significantly expanded its outreach to national stakeholders by establishing national reference groups for each ADR. These reference groups have provided rich guidance on the quality of the approach and deliverables and have contributed to strengthening the relevance of the evaluation.

Diversity of evaluation consultants

13. Support for national evaluation capacity in developing countries is a priority of the Evaluation Office. One mechanism being used to expand national engagement is to contract professionals from programme countries to support evaluations, either within their own country or beyond – regionally and internationally. In 2011, 59 per cent of consultants contracted to conduct ADRs or thematic evaluations were programme country nationals, as were 43 per cent of evaluation team leaders (six out of fourteen).[8] The India and Sri Lanka ADRs were conducted entirely by national consultants. The teams that undertook the ADRs for Costa Rica, Djibouti and Nepal each included three national consultants, as well as team members from other programme countries.

14. In 2011, 59 per cent of consultants contracted to conduct ADRs or thematic evaluations were male (compared with 68 per cent in 2010). Among consultants from programme countries, the ratio was 61 per cent male to 39 per cent female; whereas among consultants from non-programme countries the ratio was 56 per cent male to 44 per cent female. The percentage of female team leaders has increased from 23 per cent in 2010 to 36 per cent in 2011 (five of 14 team leaders were women). Table 1 provides an overview of the regional balance of consultants contracted to conduct ADRs or thematic evaluations in 2011.

[8] Consultants recruited in 2010 for evaluations whose findings are only now being reported in 2011 (Brazil, Egypt, Thailand and Tunisia) have not been included in these figures. They were included in the annual report on Evaluation 2010. It should also be noted that out of the 15 evaluations for which consultants were contracted one was led by Evaluation Office staff – only 14 team leaders were recruited.

Table 1: Evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office in 2011: consultants by region

	Africa		Arab States		Asia and the Pacific		Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States		Latin America and the Caribbean		North America		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Thematic evaluations														
Team leader	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	3	1
Team specialists/ country case study	6	0	1	1	3	2	5	9	2	2	4	3	21	17
Assessments of development results														
Team leader	0	1	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	1	3	0	6	4
Team specialist	1	1	3	1	7	5	4	3	3	0	1	2	19	12
TOTAL	7	2	4	2	13	9	12	12	5	3	8	6	49	34

B. United Nations Evaluation Group

15. The Evaluation Office continued its strong support to UNEG, including through staffing the UNEG secretariat and serving in the UNEG steering and decision-making bureau. In his role as UNEG Executive Coordinator, the Deputy Director of the Evaluation Office continues as the guardian of the UNEG annual work plan and budget. The Executive Coordinator contributed substantively to inter-agency discussions pertaining to United Nations reform and evaluation, and represented UNEG at key international development evaluation meetings. Among others, he participated in the reference group for the review of the Independent System-Wide Evaluation commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General and represented UNEG at the autumn 2011 meeting of the Evaluation Cooperation Group of the international financial institutions.

16. Evaluation Office staff made essential contributions to a number of UNEG task forces throughout the year, for instance in devising guidelines for United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) evaluation terms of reference and management responses, in disseminating the UNEG *Handbook on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation* and in peer-reviewing the *Guidance Note on National Evaluation Capacity Development*. At the 2011 Evaluation Practice Exchange Seminar, Evaluation Office colleagues acted as drivers in the sessions on Harmonization of the Evaluation Function and Evaluation Capacity Development. The Evaluation Office also participated in two professional peer reviews of the evaluation function of United Nations organizations, under the auspices of a joint task force established by the Network on Development Evaluation of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and UNEG. Finally, Evaluation Office staff were instrumental in strengthening the visibility and accountability of UNEG and, by extension, of the evaluation function across the United Nations system, providing advisory services to UNEG knowledge and financial management.

17. UNEG initiatives are integrated in the office programme of work and in the individual performance plans of staff members of the Evaluation Office.

C. Associated funds and programmes

United Nations Capital Development Fund

18. UNCDF continued to have an active evaluation function in 2011: approximately $650,000 was allocated from core and project budgets for a total of seven programme and project evaluations and one thematic portfolio review. Staffing in the UNCDF Evaluation Unit reverted to one professional post, supported by three junior professional officers and one United Nations Volunteer working as monitoring and evaluation officers, one at headquarters and one in each of the Bangkok, Dakar and Johannesburg regional offices.

19. Evaluation management was fully internalized in 2011 with the Evaluation Unit taking over responsibility for the Special Project Implementation Review Exercise previously managed by an external firm. In line with evaluation policy objectives to support decentralized evaluation, five evaluations were managed by regional offices with full support from the Evaluation Unit ensuring that evaluation procedures and reports met relevant United Nations standards. In line with the requirement in the policy of 'one strategic or thematic assessment per year', the Unit designed and managed a portfolio review of on-going projects in the area of inclusive finance.

20. In 2011 an external evaluation architecture review was completed, assessing the appropriateness and performance of the UNCDF evaluation function following changes to the policy. The review confirmed that systems are in place for the Evaluation Unit to discharge its role effectively and that UNCDF evaluations are considered to be impartial, independent and credible. The review highlighted weaknesses – common to other United Nations organizations – in programme evaluability and recommended that UNCDF should improve the linkages between evaluation and planning, monitoring and reporting systems throughout the programme cycle. In this regard, the Unit stepped up its support in 2011 to programme units, developing and applying an evaluability standard for all projects prior to being approved. It also developed a new results-focused performance-monitoring tool for use by programme colleagues based on standard evaluation principles. Four projects have been assessed to date using this tool.

United Nations Volunteers

21. The budget allocation of the UNV Evaluation Unit in 2011 amounted to $286,177, of which $222,496 were used for staffing costs and $63,681 for operational costs. Having been left without any staff in 2010, the Evaluation Unit now comprises one chief (P4, core-funded), one evaluation specialist (P3, funded through extra-budgetary resources) and a part-time administrative assistant (50 per cent, funded through extra-budgetary resources). The rebuilding of the UNV evaluation function remains a work in progress since the current level of staffing does not allow the unit to work at its full potential.

22. The Evaluation Unit has introduced a multi-year rolling evaluation work plan to replace the previous annual work plans, providing for more flexibility and adaptability, while fostering participation and corporate ownership. The Evaluation Unit has been working to catalogue, update and reorganize information currently on the shared drives, in view of migrating data to the new UNV portal. In its continuous effort to measure volunteer work, UNV produced the handbook *Assessing the Contribution of Volunteering to Development*, widely disseminated among the evaluation community.

23. In 2010-2011, UNV conducted, managed or reviewed 10 corporate-level, decentralized or joint evaluations, including strategic, thematic or project evaluations/reviews aimed at ensuring accountability, supporting decision-making and continuous programme improvement and knowledge sharing. The Evaluation Unit has also provided technical support to decentralized evaluations and is collaborating with the UNDP Evaluation Office to monitor the implementation of the management response for evaluations conducted since 2008. Overall, evidence indicates that UNV projects have succeeded in producing most of the desired results, demonstrating the potential of volunteering for civic participation and mobilization in addressing a wide range of community challenges. The joint evaluation of the collaboration between UNV and the United Nations Department of Field Support/United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations was completed and posted on the UNDP ERC.

24. The Evaluation Unit supported corporate training, planning and reporting processes and participated in a range of global level initiatives, meetings and workshops on the subject of evaluation, including UNEG. The Evaluation Unit has faced a number of challenges that include frequent turnover, weak capacity, slow responsiveness of field personnel and insufficient staff knowledge of the UNDP/UNEG evaluation-related policies and guidelines.

D. Programme units

Compliance

25. The revised UNDP evaluation policy, approved by the Executive Board, stipulates that all evaluations included in the evaluation plan are mandatory. Beginning in 2011, evaluation compliance of a country programme is measured at the end of the country programme period and based on the completion of all planned evaluations during the programme period. There were 41 country programmes completed in 2011, of which 21 (51 per cent) were compliant whereas two (5 per cent) were not compliant. The remaining 18 (44 per cent) were partially compliant (see table 2).

Table 2. Evaluation compliance

	RBA	RBAS	RBAP	RBEC	RBLAC	Total per cent compliance
Number of compliant country programmes (completed 90 to 100 per cent of all planned evaluations)	6	1	4	4	6	21 (51%)
Number of partially compliant country programmes (completed 40 to 89.99 per cent of all planned evaluations)	8	2	3	0	5	18 (44%)
Number of country programmes that were not compliant (completed 0 to 39.99 per cent of all planned evaluations)	0	2	0	0	0	2 (5%)

*Based on ERC data as of 24 May 2012. The rating is synchronized with that used by the UNDP Balanced Score Card. For the purpose of compliance reporting, evaluation reports that cover multiple outcomes are counted separately for each outcome that was to be covered based on the evaluation plan.

26. More than 90 per cent of evaluations completed in the Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and Caribbean regions received a management response in 2011 (see table 3). In the other regions, based on ERC reporting as of 24 May 2012, there was a decline in the percentage of evaluations receiving a management response.

Table 3. Evaluations with management response*

Region	Africa			Arab States			Asia and the Pacific			Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)			Latin America and Caribbean		
Year	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
Evaluations completed	74	81	72	20	27	15	69	42	65	42	57	43	50	53	53
Evaluations with management response	72 (97 %)	76 (94%)	68 (93%)	20 (100%)	22 (81%)	12 (80%)	69 (100%)	41 (98%)	62 (95%)	42 (100%)	54 (95%)	34 (79%)	50 (100%)	53 (100%)	50 (94%)

*Data are based on ERC data as of 24 May 2012. For the purpose of management response reporting, evaluation reports that cover multiple outcomes are counted separately for each outcome that was to be covered based on the evaluation plan.

Coverage

27. In the 2011 reporting period, 100 country offices completed 248 evaluations: 66 outcome evaluations, 162 project evaluations and 20 other types of evaluations, including UNDAF evaluations (see table 4). Compared with 2010, there was a 34 per cent increase in the total number of evaluations conducted, most noticeably in the Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and Caribbean regions. There was also an increase in the number of countries that conducted at least one evaluation, with the Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean region displaying the most significant increase in the number of countries conducting evaluations (see annex).

Table 4. Regional distribution of evaluations*

Evaluations conducted in 2011	All regions	Africa	Arab States	Asia and the Pacific	Europe and the CIS	Latin America and the Caribbean
Number of countries	**139**	**46**	**18**	**24**	**25**	**26**
Total number of evaluation	**248****	72	15	65	43	53
Outcome evaluation	**66**	33	2	18	7	6
Project evaluation	**162**	34	10	45	35	38
UNDAF and other programmatic evaluations	**20**	5	3	2	1	9
Percentage of evaluations with management response	**226 (91%)**	68 (93%)	12 (80%)	62 (95%)	34 (79%)	50 (94%)
Percentage of countries conducting at least one evaluation	**100 (72%)**	29 (63%)	6 (33%)	20 (83%)	21 (80%)	24 (92%)

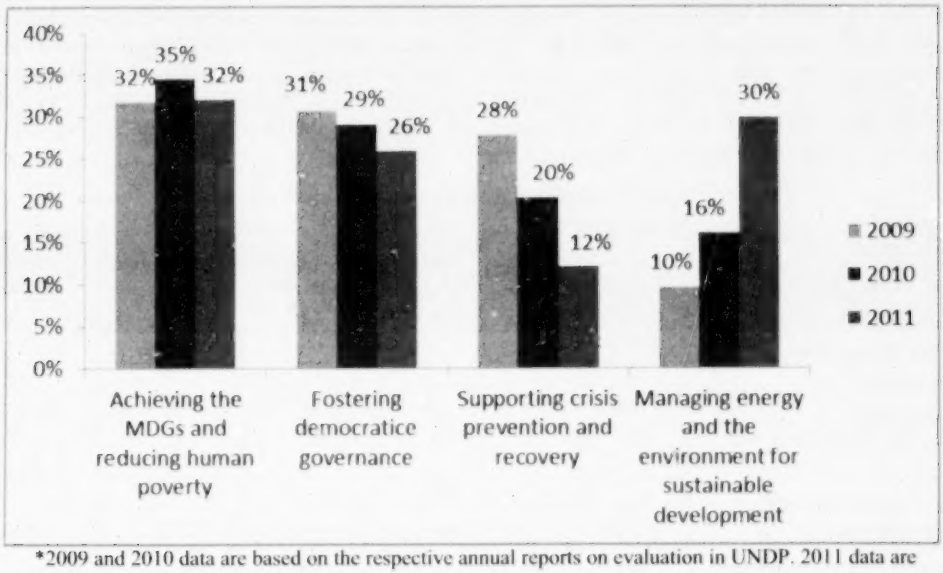
* The evaluations presented are based on ERC data as of 24 May 2012.

** Total number of evaluations completed by UNDP country offices that are present in ERC, including GEF, the MDG Acceleration Fund, UNDAF and other joint evaluations. For the purpose of compliance reporting, evaluation reports that cover multiple outcomes are counted separately for each outcome that was to be covered based on the evaluation plan.

28. The regional bureaux and the policy and practice bureaux are also required to conduct evaluations of their respective policies and programmes. During this reporting period, nine evaluations were conducted by the Bureau of Development Policy, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS and Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.

29. Of the three focus areas of 'achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty', 'fostering democratic governance' and 'managing energy and environment for sustainable development', each accounted for around 30 per cent of all evaluations conducted (see figure 1). The relative increase in evaluations in the area of 'managing energy and environment' is mostly a reflection of the high number of GEF-funded projects that UNDP carried out over the last six years that are now concluding. Country offices are also making greater efforts to ensure that evaluations of GEF-funded projects are posted on the ERC in line with the UNDP evaluation policy.

Figure 1. Thematic distribution of evaluation (2009-2011)*



*2009 and 2010 data are based on the respective annual reports on evaluation in UNDP. 2011 data are based on the ERC data as of 24 May 2012.

Quality of decentralized evaluations (excluding projects co-funded by GEF)

30. Based on the *Quality Assessment Mechanism for Decentralized Evaluations* outlined in section I.A, the Evaluation Office conducted quality assessments of 135 decentralized evaluations undertaken in 2011 and posted on the ERC as of 31 March 2012. Several types of evaluations posted on ERC were not covered by this assessment. Quality assurance for completed GEF-financed projects supported by UNDP is described separately in the following section, as they are subject to slightly different review procedures, as per guidance from the GEF Evaluation Office, and because the review exercise is done in conformity with the GEF (World Bank) fiscal year starting 1 July. As of 2012, the Evaluation Office intends to use the same quality assessment tool for all evaluations, including evaluations of GEF-funded projects.

31. Other decentralized evaluations not covered include inter-agency joint evaluation reports (including UNDAF evaluations) and evaluations conducted by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Achievement Fund. Evaluations that covered more than one outcome and that were posted multiple times on ERC for compliance purposes were only counted once for the purpose of this assessment (reducing the number of evaluations assessed from the 145 posted in ERC to 135). An overview of the total number of reports distributed across regions and by evaluation type is presented in table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of reports by region and evaluation type

	Regions and number of countries						
	2011, Global (139)	Africa (45)	Arab States (18)	Asia and the Pacific (25)	Europe and the CIS (26)	Latin America and the Caribbean (25)	Regional
Total number of evaluations	135	43	8	40	9	31	4
Project evaluations (outcome and output)	59	12	4	24	4	14	1
Outcome evaluations (programme and thematic)	76	31	4	16	5	17	3

Note: The number of evaluation reports quality assessed does not include duplicate postings

32. In line with the new companion guide on outcome-level evaluation, there is an increased tendency to pitch all evaluations at the outcome rather than output level. A large number of the evaluation reports assessed (116) had a national focus and largely concentrated on past performance (98). The evaluations were usually managed by UNDP, with the exception of 16 evaluations that were jointly managed with governments or donor agencies.

33. Each assessment uses a standardized system of weighted ratings covering seven quality-related parameters comprising terms of reference; evaluation subject, context and purpose; evaluation framework; findings; conclusions; recommendations; and lessons. The ratings are based on a six-point scale of highly satisfactory (a score of six) to highly unsatisfactory (a score of one). The annex provides a description of the rating system. The ratings are reflective of UNDP performance in designing and commissioning evaluations, including the selection and management of consultants.

34. The analysis of the overall weighted quality of the 135 reports shows that about 64 per cent of the reports were in the highly satisfactory to moderately satisfactory category. Of this a large number of evaluation reports were in the moderately satisfactory category (see table 6). About 36 per cent of the evaluations are either moderately unsatisfactory or unsatisfactory, with significant shortcomings across quality parameters. A large number of the evaluation reports (75 reports) were complete with respect to the report structure.

Table 6: Overall weighted quality assessment of the evaluation reports

	Global		Africa		Arab States		Asia and the Pacific		Europe and CIS		Latin America and the Caribbean	
Ratings	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Highly satisfactory/ good	2	1.5	2	4.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Satisfactory	25	18.5	9	20.9	0	0	3	7.5	3	30	10	30.3
Moderately satisfactory	59	43.7	16	37.2	4	50	17	42.5	4	40	17	51.5
Moderately unsatisfactory	42	31.1	13	30.2	4	50	16	40	3	30	6	18.2
Unsatisfactory	7	5.2	3	7	0	0	4	10	0	0	0	0
Highly unsatisfactory	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	135	100	43	100	8	100	40	100	10	100	33	100

35. The quality-related parameters that received relatively high scores included terms of reference, definition of the evaluation subject, context and purpose. While the basic presentation of findings was often sound, there was significant room to strengthen the consistent use of evaluation criteria. Moreover, coverage of crosscutting principles, including human development, gender equality or capacity development, left much to be desired. By far the weakest parameter was the treatment of conclusions – the presentation of the implications of findings and the formulation of judgements. Recommendations, nonetheless, were presented in a relatively satisfactory manner. The annex includes a more detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the decentralized evaluation reports and provides an orientation for programme units to further strengthen the quality of their evaluations.

Quality of decentralized evaluations of projects co-funded by GEF

36. For the 2010/2011 review period, UNDP completed and evaluated 63 projects in all regions, covering all GEF focal areas: biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, land degradation, chemicals and international waters. The review of these 63 terminal evaluations indicates a high degree of quality, with 81 per cent (51 out of 63) judged to be in the range of highly satisfactory to moderately satisfactory. Only one evaluation was deemed unsatisfactory in quality. This review is consistent with findings from recent years. For the 2009/2010 period, with a smaller cohort (30), the percentage of terminal evaluations considered moderately satisfactory or better was 83 per cent (25). Terminal evaluation assessments of project outcomes and project effectiveness consistently rate well, while weaknesses are most pronounced in the consideration of project financial aspects and the evidence for findings relating to efficiency and sustainability. During the past several years, voices have urged closer links between UNDP human development-related priorities and the global environmental benefits that are at the core of the GEF mandate. This linkage remains a work in progress. In this cohort, one third of project documents (22) and terminal evaluations (24) included a discussion on gender aspects. Sixty-eight per cent of the project documents (43) and 62 per cent of the terminal evaluations (39) provided a narrative on livelihoods and the economic consequences of the project for local residents. It is important to note that both GEF and UNDP guidance has been recently strengthened on these mainstreaming

issues. As mentioned above, the UNDP Evaluation Office has now issued new guidance on evaluating UNDP projects financed by GEF. In the future, the development of management responses to the terminal evaluations will need closer attention, as only 52 per cent (33) of the cohort included management responses. The uploading of UNDP/GEF terminal evaluations to the ERC will also require closer attention since half of the cohort (32) has not been uploaded. This uploading problem is most acute for global and regional UNDP/GEF project terminal evaluations

E. Evaluation capacity

37. Data at the country level gathered by the Evaluation Office for the annual report 2011 show that there has been a slight increase in the overall number of country offices with dedicated monitoring and evaluation units, reflecting an increase from 27 to 29 per cent. In many country offices, the monitoring and evaluation function is integrated into a larger unit, and staff members responsible for monitoring and evaluation often carry out other functions (see table 7).

Table 7. Decentralized evaluation support capacity in 2011

	UNDP Global	Africa	Arab States	Asia and the Pacific	Europe and CIS	Latin America and the Caribbean
Number of country offices	140	46	18	24	26	26
Country offices with monitoring and evaluation units	40 (29%)	21(46%)	5 (28%)	4 (17%)	0	10 (38%)
Country-level monitoring and evaluation specialists	54	22	9	11	0	12
Regional-level monitoring and evaluation specialists and advisers	8	3	1	3*	4*	1

* Staff time is not exclusively dedicated to monitoring and evaluation.

38. Evaluation capacity at the regional level has increased from last year. The Regional Bureau for Africa has a headquarters-based adviser and two advisers in Johannesburg and Dakar; the Regional Bureau for the Arab States has an adviser in Cairo; and the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean has an evaluation specialist in Panama. The Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific now has three staff members who cover monitoring and evaluation issues on a part-time basis – two in the Bangkok regional centre and one at headquarters. Three out of four of the staff members who now cover monitoring and evaluation issues of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States do so on a part-time basis – two are based in the Bratislava regional centre (one of whom has full-time monitoring responsibilities) and two are at headquarters.

39. In 2011, regular meetings were held of the Evaluation Family Force, a community of evaluation focal points, comprising regional policy and practice bureaux, evaluation specialists and advisers in regional bureaux, regional service centres, the Evaluation Office, and evaluation units of the UNDP associated funds and programmes. The group mainly discusses topics related to decentralized evaluation. Issues covered to date include preparation of evaluation plans, outcome-level evaluation guidance, quality assessment of decentralized evaluation, the evaluation expert roster, and management response practices. It is hoped that this exchange of ideas will improve evaluation culture and practice in UNDP.

Support to national evaluation capacity

40. Together with the Public Service Commission of South Africa, the Evaluation Office co-organized the second International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities, from 12 to 14 September 2011 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The event was attended by nearly 100 participants from more than 30 countries with different levels of development in national monitoring and evaluation systems. The

conference focused on sharing experiences on evaluation use for public policies and programmes. Participants identified lessons and constraints in implementing national monitoring and evaluation systems with an emphasis on evaluation use and on supply and demand for technical assistance in strengthening institutional capacity for national use of evaluation under the umbrella of South-South and triangular cooperation. Discussions covered systemic factors contributing to the use of evaluation, how monitoring facilitates evaluation use, taking evaluation into account in establishing evaluation systems, and opportunities for longer-term initiatives on national evaluation capacity. Proposed follow-up activities include initiating reflection processes in each country and exchanging experiences regionally using a UNDP Internet portal, which provides access to a range of resources. It is expected that the third conference in this series will take place in 2013.

III. Key findings and lessons learned from independent evaluations

41. This section summarizes the key findings and lessons learned from fifteen independent ADRs conducted or completed by the Evaluation Office in 2011.

A. Meeting national priorities and development challenges

42. Many evaluations conducted in 2011 indicated that UNDP was recognized as a valued, respected and key development partner supporting government. UNDP work remained relevant to national priorities and development challenges facing the programme countries and UNDP was often at the forefront of national strategy development. The countries examined included some in critical transition to normalization after years of conflict that had hampered development (Djibouti, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Moldova, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka). Evaluations indicated that UNDP maintained its relevance often under difficult, complex and fluid circumstances by closely monitoring its operational environment, ensuring that the programme was in alignment with the country's underlying development strategy, and exploiting its political neutrality. In some countries, UNDP achieved relevance by targeting its programme particularly to poor and marginalized groups (Costa Rica, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand) and by addressing the critical challenges, including natural disasters such as tsunamis (Pacific island countries, Sri Lanka and Thailand) or the need to demobilize a large number of ex-combatants (Democratic Republic of the Congo). In some countries, Egypt for instance, UNDP established an influential public policy platform via country-level human development reports.

43. In other cases, evaluations called for more programme focus to maintain relevance in the country. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNDP was increasingly perceived as a service provider for managing large-scale multi-donor trust funds rather than as a catalyst for capacity building or providing substantive development leadership. The ADR pointed out that the country's strategy may have been driven by resource mobilization opportunities rather than consideration to areas where UNDP had comparative strengths. In India, where UNDP was one of many partners implementing poverty reduction projects, it was critical for UNDP to be more strategic and focus, for example, more on upstream work than on delivering multiple small projects on livelihoods, and making clear choices in project selection and resource allocation. In the United Arab Emirates, the need for strong commitment in supporting the northern emirates was needed in order to address its development priorities.

44. Some countries made significant progress in the MDGs (Djibouti and Egypt). While the pace of achieving the MDGs varied across countries, ADRs recognized the significant contribution that UNDP made in supporting countries to take steps towards achieving the MDGs. UNDP raised awareness to accelerate the national achievement of MDGs, particularly by supporting government to develop clearly defined targets and indicators, prepare a detailed costing plan and produce regularly issued MDG progress reports (Brazil, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Egypt, Moldova, and Papua New Guinea). Many ADRs also stressed the importance of integrating the MDGs into concrete, realistic national and sub-national development plans (Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pacific island countries and Papua New Guinea) and encouraged UNDP to continue to support governments by emphasizing human development at the centre of its programme (Nepal and India) and by addressing its challenges such as lack of resources, low quality and reliability of national statistics, and limited dissemination of MDG reports and analyses (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Papua New Guinea and Tunisia). In some

middle-income countries, such as Tunisia, the government did not necessarily see the MDGs as relevant for the country, but results of MDG monitoring did highlight the existence of sub-national disparities. In Thailand where the MDGs were largely achieved at the national level, the ADR called for UNDP to pay more attention to disparities at the local level, systematically linking the national and sub-national planning processes in achieving the MDGs. In Costa Rica, the UNDP human development approach was successfully incorporated into the formulation of public policies and national development plans and, most recently, in the policy on citizen security and social peace, promoting the practice of democratic interaction among citizens. In Egypt, the five periodic MDG assessments that UNDP supported provided clear and public evidence of the uneven progress in poverty alleviation across the country, helping to spur government action.

B. Achieving programme goals

45. The degree to which UNDP had been effective in its programme varied across countries. Some ADRs indicated that UNDP had made significant contributions to development results and demonstrated positive results in most of the programme areas (Costa Rica, Brazil, Egypt, Liberia, Nepal and Moldova). Factors contributing to success included strong leadership in the country office management (including its ability to take calculated risks), committed staff, and programme planning that was based on an extensive situation and needs analysis. The contextualization of critical issues was particularly important in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where the conditions were so specific that there could be no blueprint approach to programme development. Close collaboration with government and other national stakeholders was another critical element. In the Pacific island countries, UNDP support in mainstreaming environment and climate change in national development strategies was instrumental in generating policy-level attention to environmental issues. The factors preventing the programme from fully achieving its expected results included, overly ambitious targets given the country's context, a secondary role for UNDP in the programme area where other development partners have assumed a more substantive role, and limited financial and human resources at the country office. In some countries, while UNDP provided effective policy and capacity development support, further support in the actual implementation of those policies and programmes would be needed for full development results to be achieved (Brazil, Moldova). This would require careful examination of specific conditions under which those policies and programmes are more likely to be implemented.

46. Having a well-defined, focused programme was highlighted as essential in ensuring UNDP effectiveness. Across the ADRs, UNDP was reminded of the need to take a thorough approach when developing a work plan, based on strategic analysis and consultation with stakeholders. In Egypt, the United Nations country team, together with the wider Development Partners Group, plus the Government, produced a common situation analysis in 2010 that identified country needs and provided the basis for strategy setting for development support, including under the UNDAF and country programme document. In Nepal, the ADR documented the country office's recent successful effort in formulating a strategic work programme by significantly reducing the number of projects and consolidating related projects into larger programmes, even while the country programme has been expanding rapidly.

C. Integration and promotion of gender, human rights and capacity development

47. UNDP was often regarded as well positioned to promote United Nations values, particularly on issues such as gender equality and human rights, and brought them to national debates and agendas. Several favourable findings were reported in the 2011 ADRs, including: integrating gender into UNDP programming rather than treating it as a stand-alone programme area (Nepal); conducting a joint gender programme with other United Nations organizations, such as UN Women, producing far-reaching results (Costa Rica, Egypt and Moldova); taking a comprehensive approach to address gender issues and support implementation through a Security Council resolution (Liberia); and the country office consistently and increasingly supporting programmes that actively promote equity, including gender and human rights (Djibouti). In other countries, the need for full integration of those issues into UNDP programme planning and implementation was stressed. Challenges included, for example, lack of a holistic strategy, narrowly focused activities, and a missing sense of urgency among government (Pacific island countries, Papua New Guinea). In Thailand, the ADR called for reaching out to citizens to raise awareness about

their rights and opportunities, extending UNDP advocacy beyond the policy-making circle. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tunisia, promotion of human rights was somewhat overshadowed by their programme emphasis on technical aspects of anti-corruption and electoral support. Even on such technical aspects, UNDP encountered significant challenges in Tunisia before the revolution.

48. Evaluations indicated that UNDP contributed to developing the capacity of many individuals and institutions at local and central government, at the community level within civil society and within the country office (Liberia). In some countries, however, there was limited evidence that 'institutional' capacity would develop over time, since activities tended to be of one-off without a long-term strategy or a thorough institutional capacity assessment (Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nepal). Limited practices of sharing and transfer of knowledge and skills among trainees, as well as frequent departures of staff and officials, also pose a threat to the development of sustained institutional capacity. As many countries moved toward the national implementation modality, some ADRs also highlighted the need for more training and technical assistance to government partners (Djibouti and Nepal). In other countries where capacity constraints might become an issue, flexibility in adopting the national implementation modality was raised (Pacific island countries and Papua New Guinea). In Sri Lanka, the absence of capacity assessments and exit strategies hampered the appropriate transfer of functions to national institutions.

D. Improving programme and management efficiency

49. UNDP improved its programme and management efficiency in some countries where concrete steps were taken by the country office. Examples included the improvement in procurement and disbursement of funds by establishing a dedicated programme support unit (Liberia, Nepal and Papua New Guinea) as well as high programme delivery rates maintained throughout the review period despite the country's rapid programme expansion, owing to strong management leadership and timely programme response by staff (Moldova). Some country offices enhanced their monitoring and evaluation function by setting up field offices (Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nepal). In Nepal, UNDP established three field monitoring offices in the regions where most of its projects were located. Each office was headed by a field coordinator, who was tasked with conducting the monitoring of projects independently of programme and project staff. The country office monitoring and evaluation unit further evolved into a strategic management and development effectiveness unit, which provided analytical input to the office's strategic planning as well as the UNDAF process. The Thailand ADR called for stronger capacity for monitoring and evaluation not only in the country office but also among national implementing partners in order to improve results monitoring and reporting. In the United Arab Emirates, the ADR reported that UNDP needed to strengthen systems for programme management, for example, by establishing clear guidelines for accountability and reporting within the country office and with clients.

50. Efficiency remained a challenge in many countries, however, and included delays in procurement and payment disbursements, uneven progress in programme delivery and implementation, complex administrative procedures, and lack of communication with development partners on internal rules and regulations (Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pacific island countries and Papua New Guinea). The 2011 ADRs included several post-conflict countries, where much of UNDP work focused on supporting the government with critical policy and strategy formulation, intensive capacity development, facilitating peace-building and reconstruction programmes, and providing specific technical support (for example, in disarmament, and demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo). While UNDP was reported as having effectively complemented the government's work for transition, critical limitations for UNDP – including delays in responding to emerging issues, limited technical capacity of staff, and challenges in engaging fragile governments – also emerged, given often weak national institutions and capacities (Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia). In Djibouti, concerns over chronically limited human and financial resources at the country office were reported, where the role of UNDP included mobilization of resources to help the country serve as a strategic regional hub on peace in the Horn of Africa.

E. Ensuring more sustainability in development results

51. Limited sustainability in UNDP interventions was a recurring issue. ADRs indicated that sustainability of development results was often fragile and not ensured in many countries owing to factors including scarce resources by governments, donors and UNDP, and a thin spread of such resources; weak programme design and strategies; limited oversight and monitoring capability, particularly when projects were spread in a geographically diverse country; inherent constraints faced by the government; lack of synergies across and within progammes (for example, integration of gender, social inclusion and environment in all programme aspects), where efforts are made in isolation, limiting full programme potentials; and, in the case of conflict countries, challenges in securing government involvement in activities when the peace process and institutional development were incomplete. In Djibouti, the evaluation reported that the impressive establishment of the national statistical office could only be sustained if statisticians were continually trained and available, and local development initiatives would be successful if sustainable revenue sources were developed among local governments. In Brazil, UNDP was found underutilizing knowledge available through international networks.

52. The ADRs indicated that UNDP built solid partnerships with the government in many countries, often utilizing its unique, close access to central coordinating agencies (Costa Rica, Brazil, Egypt and Pacific island countries). The extent and depth of its partnerships with local authorities, international donors, civil society organizations and development partners, however, was reported as still being weak in many countries, limiting the opportunities for scaling up UNDP interventions as well as for promoting sustainable human development. In India, there was scope for greater engagement of UNDP with local development research centres, South-South exchange of scholars and experts, and other forms of partnership involving state/local administrations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations organizations, in order to strengthen knowledge and learning within UNDP, which in turn should be used for the benefit of immediate counterparts. Similarly in Sri Lanka, the ADR noted that national intellectual resources should be further exploited to enhance the policy support provided by UNDP and to strengthen national ownership of those policies. Favourable examples in partnerships were also documented in the 2011 ADRs. In Moldova, the significant support of UNDP to the Global Compact Network, which increased engagement of the private sector, contributed to success in the poverty reduction programme, in addition to its development partnership agreement made between the government and all development partners operating in the country. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is going through a fragile transition process, the strong partnership established with all development partners on the ground, including local governments, civil society, non-governmental organizations and United Nations organizations, was a critical factor in successfully developing a common roadmap for the country.

IV. Programme of work for the Evaluation Office for 2012-2013

53. The programme of work for the Evaluation Office is aligned with the UNDP strategic plan and approved by the Executive Board. The 2012 programme of work of the Evaluation Office is as follows and will be funded under the 2012-2013 biennial support budget approved by the Executive Board in its decision 2010/1 of 22 January 2010. A tentative programme of work for 2013 is also provided since planning for this work will need to begin in 2012.

A. Approved programme of work 2012

54. The following evaluations were included in the tentative programme of work approved by the Executive Board at its annual session in June 2011:

(a) Evaluation of the effectiveness of the UNDP strategic plan;

(b) Five evaluations of the regional programmes in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Arab States, Europe and the CIS, and Latin America and the Caribbean;

(c) Evaluation of the Global Programme;

(d) Evaluation of the South-South Programme; and

(e) Six ADRs.

55. The Evaluation Office will continue to support decentralized evaluation though managing a number of services and continuing to prepare and strengthen guidance:

(a) Managing the decentralized evaluations quality assessment system;

(b) Managing the roster of evaluation consultants;

(c) Managing the ERC; and

(d) Managing the evaluation space on Teamworks and developing evaluation knowledge products.

56. In addition, the Evaluation Office will continue to host and manage the secretariat of UNEG and contribute to the UNEG programme of work.

B. Proposed programme of work 2013

57. The tentative programme of work for 2013 is based on the Evaluation Office submission for the biennial budget:

(a) The second evaluation of gender mainstreaming in UNDP as a follow-up to the 2006 evaluation;

(b) Two thematic evaluations to be started in 2013 (themes to be determined in consultation with the Executive Board);

(c) Six ADRs (representing half of the country programmes that will be presented to the Executive Board in 2014);

(d) The Evaluation Office will also support the third International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities;

(e) In compliance with Executive Board decision 2010/16, the Evaluation Office will facilitate an independent review of the UNDP evaluation policy. Agreement has been reached with the Executive Board that the review will be completed in 2013 and be presented to the Executive Board in 2014; and

(f) The Evaluation Office will continue to support the evaluation function (as described in the approved programme of work for 2013) as well as the UNEG secretariat.

United Nations DP/2012/21

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services

Distr.: General
13 June 2012

Original: English

Second regular session 2012
4 to 10 September 2012, New York
Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Evaluation

Evaluation of the UNDP contribution to strengthening electoral systems and processes

Executive summary

Contents

Chapter		*Page*
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Findings	5
III.	Conclusions	8
IV.	Recommendations	10

12-37358 (E) 020712

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. This evaluation of the UNDP contribution to strengthening electoral systems and processes covers UNDP electoral assistance since 1990. Conducted from June 2011 to January 2012, the evaluation is part of the 2011-2012 Evaluation Office programme of work approved by the UNDP Executive Board. It is the first corporate-level thematic evaluation that focuses on the organization's electoral assistance. The evaluation examines UNDP performance in strengthening electoral systems and processes, and UNDP strategic positioning and ability to promote more credible and inclusive electoral processes and institutions.

2. Elections are among the most important ways citizens participate in the decisions that affect their lives and hold their representatives accountable for results. As such, elections have been an integral aspect of United Nations-supported democratic transitions, decolonization processes and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. General Assembly resolution 55/2 on the United Nations Millennium Declaration demonstrates the consensus among nations of the world to "spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development". Elections stand as a cornerstone in this process.

3. UNDP electoral assistance is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which affirm that the will of the people is the basis of government authority, and that every eligible citizen has the right to take part in the government of her or his country. Credible, regular and inclusive elections confer the essential political legitimacy that underpins stable states and provides the mandates for governments to tackle the tough challenges of sustainable development. The ultimate UNDP goal is to "deepen democracy and accelerate sustainable human development by giving all people the ability to participate in the decisions that affect their lives".[1]

4. This evaluation examines the UNDP role in and contribution to achieving such objectives. It assesses the performance quality and added value of UNDP electoral assistance between 1990 and 2011, focusing primarily on the past 10 years. The evaluation examines the different approaches used to provide electoral assistance in diverse contexts and, based on the evidence collected, identifies the main issues, assesses what has and has not worked, and concludes with a set of policy-relevant, forward-looking recommendations. The evaluation aims to support future work by contributing to an understanding of how UNDP can provide assistance in a more effective and sustainable manner.

5. The evaluation covers UNDP support in all geographic regions and within diverse contexts, such as: mission (peacekeeping or political) and non-mission countries, varying political environments (immediate post-conflict, post-conflict/transition, more stable state) and different types of assistance (event- or process-driven). The evaluation pays particular attention to national perspectives on UNDP support of these important national processes. It is important to note that this not an evaluation of national electoral processes or events.

6. The evaluation uses the UNDP results framework for electoral assistance as the basis for forming a judgment on the value and quality of UNDP work. The framework links electoral assistance to a set of outcomes defined in UNDP strategic documents. These

[1] UNDP Strategic Plan, paragraph 1. 2008-2013

outcomes include achieving more credible and inclusive electoral processes, systems and institutions through more professional electoral administration and more inclusive participation. The evaluation also assesses country-office ability to manage electoral projects, mobilize funds and coordinate donors.

7. The evaluation team used the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability to guide the development of evaluation questions, data collection, and analysis. A mixed-method approach was used to develop a robust basis for generating evidence and to enhance explanations that support the findings. Evaluation methods included case studies, broad-based surveys with a variety of stakeholders and expert informants, interviews, and meta-analysis of existing evaluations.

8. To assess work in different contexts, the evaluation included 11 country case studies of UNDP assistance in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Chad, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mexico and Mozambique. The case studies facilitated comparing results across countries, regions and contexts to identify the most effective types of assistance for specific conditions and the factors that contribute to or inhibit outcome achievement. Beyond country-specific studies, other in-depth analyses of UNDP support included: a historical analysis of UNDP work dating back to 1990; an examination of UNDP partnerships in electoral assistance; an assessment of the nature, configuration and budget of the UNDP portfolio of projects and programmes; and a review of the appropriateness and sustainability of electoral technology introduced by technical assistance.

9. This evaluation also coordinated and exchanged information with several other evaluations, which were undertaken at the same time. These included: 'Evaluation of UNDP Assistance to Conflict-Affected Countries' (UNDP Evaluation Office); 'Lessons Learned on the Longer-Term Impact of United Nations Electoral Assistance' (UNDP Bureau for Development Policy); 'Lessons Learned on Integrated Electoral Assistance' (UNDP Bureau for Development Policy, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Political Affairs); 'Entry Points for Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment' (UNDP Bureau for Development Policy); and 'Evaluation of Department for International Development Electoral Support Through UNDP' (United Kingdom Independent Commission for Aid Impact).

10. The main limitation to the evaluation stemmed from the enormous scope of support activities under review, programmatic and task-related complexities, and the vast range of contexts and conditions in which electoral assistance is provided. Equally important are the historical lack of consistency in classifying electoral projects in Atlas[2] and a general lack of institutional memory for completed projects at the country level, both of which made data collection and analysis difficult. Despite recent improvements to the Atlas system and its use, many UNDP electoral programmes remain under reported. To compensate, the evaluation team requested specific information from every country office, which provided additional data for 52 countries. For the in-depth country case studies, the politically sensitive nature of the evaluation theme, the number of planned elections and concurrent country-level evaluation missions affected the selection of case-study countries. Country-level events such as elections and other missions also influenced the timing of fieldwork, compressing the evaluation's time for analysis and report preparation.

[2] Atlas is the Enterprise Resource Planning database system used by UNDP to manage projects, finances, human resources, inventory and procurement, and to facilitate internal control and accountability.

11. UNDP support to strengthening electoral processes started in the 1970s and expanded significantly after the end of the Cold War, when many countries first began to organize multiparty elections. Initial efforts focused on filling the knowledge gap on how to hold a democratic election. As understanding of the process improved, the focus of assistance shifted towards increasing the credibility and legitimacy of electoral processes, institutions and outcomes. In working towards these goals, UNDP identified 10 main entry points, which currently guide how the organization provides electoral assistance: electoral system reform, strengthening electoral administration, building sustainable electoral processes, mobilization and coordination of resources, civic and voter education, electoral dispute resolution, support to domestic observation, working with political parties, media strengthening and increasing women's participation. UNDP provides both event- and process-driven support. The former addresses the needs of a particular event, such as voter registration or an election. In contrast, process-driven support takes a more holistic and inclusive approach, providing assistance before, during and after an electoral event. Such support takes the 'electoral cycle' approach, reflected in about half of the current UNDP projects.

12. Although electoral assistance is similar to other types of support in the democratic governance sector, it is quite different from non-governance development assistance. Elections are national events mandated by a constitution, law or a peace accord. At the same time, there are widely accepted international obligations for credible elections, including the need for a competitive choice, the right of all citizens to participate as voters or candidates, and a free, secret and universal vote. Electoral timelines, institutions, processes and actors are prescribed, directly affecting the nature, quality and results of assistance. Elections are high-visibility events and mix logistical and technical work with important political consequences. In addition to being time-bound, elections have large-scale organizational, procurement, technological, logistical, security and training needs. Elections deal with the competition for power and control over resources; governments are actors in these processes, and ruling parties compete in them. The electoral process can both generate and help resolve conflict. Elections may not guarantee democracy, but democracy cannot exist without credible elections. In a credible, successful election, all stakeholders—winners, losers and voters—trust the process and accept the results. Electoral assistance is provided within this highly political and often volatile context.

13. There is a continuing demand for UNDP electoral assistance. The number of UNDP-supported countries has increased from 28 in 2004 to 62 in 2011, with the highest number of countries in Africa (24), followed by Asia and the Pacific (12), Latin America and the Caribbean (12), the Arab States (7) and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (7). In total, UNDP has assisted 83 countries with a budget of approximately US$2.9 billion and expenditures of approximately $2.2 billion between 1999 and 2011. This represents a range of 5–27 percent of all UNDP democratic governance assistance and 2–10 percent of total UNDP support. The higher end of such ranges reflects UNDP assistance during years of large post-conflict elections, such as those in Afghanistan and Sudan. According to the data supplied by 46 country offices, approximately 95 percent of electoral assistance funding is from non-core sources, which was most notable in Africa and Asia and the Pacific.

14. In the context of electoral assistance, the largest UNDP focus area is strengthening electoral administration, accounting for approximately 25 percent of the total effort[3] in the estimate of 39 country offices. Civic and voter education follows with 19 percent, and

[3] The term 'effort' describes the degree of UNDP engagement in a focus area in view of country-office personnel responding to evaluation questions. It does not necessarily parallel actual funds allocated to a project.

building sustainable electoral processes ranks third at 12 percent. Increasing women's political participation and working with political parties received 9 percent and 5 percent of support, respectively. Areas receiving the lowest level of assistance are electoral dispute resolution (4 percent), media strengthening, and working with political parties (5 percent each). UNDP provides both 'hard' and 'soft' assistance, defined for this evaluation as project, and policy advice/advocacy/brokerage, respectively. Of the 33 country offices that provided this information, 70 percent had both hard and soft assistance, and 18 percent reported more soft than hard assistance. All but one of these (UNDF Sudan) are in non-mission countries. UNDP also supports South-South and peer-peer cooperation: more than 60 percent of evaluation survey respondents reported South-South and peer-peer cooperation in UNDP support to electoral administration and 50 percent in its support to women's participation.

15. At the corporate level, the Democratic Governance Group of the Bureau for Development Policy manages support for electoral assistance and has a dedicated full-time advisor (sub-practice leader). The recent Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support, a $50 million project with a three-year span, has expanded the elections assistance policy team to 19 officers working at headquarter and regional levels. UNDP has also entered into a number of multi-organizational partnerships; for example, in 2006, UNDP and the European Commission formed a Joint Task Force and adopted shared operational guidelines for implementing election assistance programmes and projects. UNDP has also entered into a number of memorandums of understanding for greater collaboration with democratic governance organizations and, through such partnerships, produced a number of joint products and tools on electoral matters.

16. UNDP provides electoral assistance within a larger United Nations context. A United Nations Focal Point for Electoral Assistance Activities was appointed in 1991, following the General Assembly resolution 46/137 to coordinate activities in the area and ensure system-wide coherence and consistency. The Focal Point, currently the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, assisted by the Electoral Assistance Department of the Department of Political Affairs, makes formative decisions about whether and how the United Nations provides assistance. UNDP assistance begins with a country government request or mandate from the United Nations Security Council or General Assembly. The nature of the request defines the parameters for UNDP action, and, in some cases, may limit UNDP ability to address some key components of the electoral support process. The Electoral Assistance Department and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations typically take the lead in electoral assistance in mission contexts, though UNDP usually plays a significant implementing role.

II. Findings

17. **UNDP is most relevant for its role as an impartial provider of electoral assistance, which supports processes and institutions so that they better reflect democratic values and international obligations.** However, this sense of purpose was not necessarily clear or consistently exercised at the country level. Some country offices saw their main purpose as supporting the government rather than the processes. In these cases, their programmes were seen as 'too close to government'.

18. **UNDP is highly relevant and adds value when it takes on a development role to strengthen electoral processes.** However, application of the United Nations electoral assistance policy framework is problematic and, in some cases, actually constrains UNDP ability to fully assume this development role, reducing the organization's relevance and effectiveness. This was most evident in the UNDP relationship with the Electoral Assistance Department of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs,

which has a shorter-term focus on achieving the political imperatives of a mission mandate or electoral event.

19. **Institutionally, UNDP understands the nature of electoral assistance in different political contexts, but this understanding is not always integrated into programme design or implementation.** UNDP has codified best practices and institutional policies, such as the electoral cycle approach, and developed, at headquarter level, a set of analytical tools. However, these are not systematically used or institutionalized at the country level, which remains predominately dependent on the analysis and individual experience of the Chief Technical Advisor and the political skills and interests of the Resident Representative.

20. **UNDP electoral assistance is relevant to improving human development and responding to national priorities to strengthen electoral processes.** In a mission context, UNDP assistance has successfully helped achieve processes mandated by peace agreements, helping foster peace and stability. In both mission and non-mission contexts, UNDP assistance was seen as relevant when it built national ownership of the electoral process and contributed to strengthened democratic governance and the ability of political and civil society to participate freely and more effectively.

21. **UNDP is generally effective at providing technical assistance that strengthens the work of electoral management bodies and results in the holding of credible electoral events.** UNDP technical assistance has improved the professionalism of electoral management bodies in most contexts. Similarly, such assistance has led to more credible electoral events than would have been the case in its absence. The degree of political goodwill among different stakeholders to hold free and fair elections was a critical contributing factor of this achievement, as was having sufficient time to appropriately design and deliver specific interventions.

22. **UNDP effectiveness at improving the enabling environment for more credible elections and processes does not match the organization's level of success at the technical level.** A credible electoral process requires meaningful participation by citizens, candidates, political parties and the media. UNDP has had some good results at the event level, as demonstrated by improved voter turnout or curbed media excess. However, the organization has been less consistent with proactively promoting the normative values of a free and fair process, thus limiting effectiveness.

23. **UNDP support has led to the development of more inclusive electoral processes and increased participation by women and other groups, but further effort is needed in this area.** UNDP support has helped improve the legal frameworks for equal participation by all stakeholder groups. This has increased voter turnout for women and marginalized groups, as well as increased the number of elected female officials. In some cases, UNDP-supported registration processes provided a civic identity to certain marginalized groups for the first time. Although the Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support provides a platform for gender mainstreaming, UNDP efforts to mainstream gender outside of this programme remain inconsistent.

24. **UNDP can effectively deliver high-tech solutions for electoral processes in developing countries, but there are growing concerns about the cost and appropriateness of some of these systems in the development context.** UNDP has effectively delivered high-tech solutions in more than half (approximately 55 percent) of assisted countries. Although this assistance has been aid-effective in that it improved short-term electoral event goals, it has not been development-effective, as some of the implemented systems are not sustainable without continued external financial and/or technical support.

25. **UNDP programming has been able to mitigate or prevent some election-related violence.** Corporate understanding of the links between elections and violence, and of the possible UNDP mitigating role, is only beginning to be systematized. UNDP programmes have been successful in reducing or mitigating some election-related violence, but this—similar to programming decisions at the country level—depended greatly on the quality, political sensitivity and experience of Resident Representatives and Chief Technical Advisors. There are limits to conflict prevention efforts, however, if the root causes of the conflict or lack of political will to have a free, fair and peaceful process are not directly addressed.

26. **The UNDP process-focused (electoral cycle) approach is not systematically applied in practice, as most assistance still centres on events.** This process-based approach is a logical extension of the organization's development mandate and is used in about half of UNDP projects. Yet in many cases, the actual project focus remains on events and does not reflect a sustained effort to strengthen electoral cycle processes themselves. Where the cycle approach is genuinely followed, it is generally effective in developing national ownership, strengthening institutional capacities and creating a stronger enabling environment.

27. **Cumbersome procedures and slow recruitment and procurement processes affect UNDP management of electoral projects.** UNDP has managed billions of dollars in electoral assistance and is widely seen as the only organization that could manage such large amounts of funding. However, national and international partners are increasingly critical of the slow speed of UNDP institutional procedures, which, in some cases, have resulted in late delivery of commodities or staff, negatively affecting the supported processes and damaging UNDP credibility.

28. **Uneven quality of reporting on basket funds and project performance does not provide donors with adequate information on the use of their funds.** Electoral management bodies and donors have expressed concern that UNDP reports lack adequate performance data (reporting against outcomes) and financial information needed to assess the cost-effectiveness of assistance. Donors felt that pervasive lack of timely or adequate reporting has actually increased their transaction costs as a result of follow-up requests for information.

29. **UNDP is generally efficient at donor coordination and mobilization of funds, but donors are increasingly looking for more cost-effective solutions and more efficient project management and delivery.** UNDP basket funds have been the default electoral support mechanism for many donors. This has helped ensure consistency of approach, avoid duplication of efforts and raise substantial levels of funding for national electoral processes. However, internal inefficiencies and the high costs of some processes have resulted in some donors questioning the value-for-cost of their assistance through UNDP. These donors are now assessing other options.

30. **UNDP is a leader in the field of electoral knowledge, but this knowledge is not systematically applied or shared at the country level, affecting efficiencies and performance.** UNDP has played a central role in the codification of knowledge in electoral assistance. There is now a body of knowledge and expertise available for use in the design and implementation of country-level projects, and for use by local electoral management bodies, non-governmental organizations and other national stakeholders. The UNDP challenge is to ensure that the knowledge contained in such resources is used to guide country-level electoral programming, as opposed to the current practice, which bases decisions primarily on the individual perceptions and experiences of Resident Representatives, governance units or technical experts.

31. **UNDP implementation modalities for electoral assistance require balancing the need for impartiality with the efficiency required in electoral contexts.** UNDP uses both national execution and direct execution project modalities. Nationally executed projects help build local capacity and encourage national ownership. However, given the size, complexity and political nature of electoral projects and the processes they assist, national execution is more appropriate for contexts with higher levels of development and mature electoral management bodies.

32. **UNDP assistance that incorporates development and capacity-building considerations increases national ownership and contributes to more sustainable results.** UNDP projects that built capacity rather than replaced it showed a clear progression of national ownership—by electoral management bodies and civil society—of the activities and normative values supported by the programme. Such ownership has reduced the need for continuing technical assistance over time. Financial independence and long-term changes to the enabling environment depended to a great degree on the local political will for these processes.

33. **UNDP support to developing sustainable electoral processes requires an increased focus on the appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of solutions.** UNDP programmes have not placed enough emphasis on developing sustainable electoral processes that use cost-effective and context-appropriate systems and technologies. Some of these may be politically expedient, especially in mission and fragile contexts, but some countries are unable to sustain the systems without external assistance.

34. **The enabling environment or lack thereof, and whether root causes of local electoral problems are addressed, directly affect the sustainability of UNDP contributions.** Many of the problems relating to the enabling environment are structural and stem from the winner-takes-all nature of electoral and political systems. In these cases, UNDP and others have made substantial contributions when reform-minded governments or electoral management bodies were in place. However, sustaining such gains beyond the end of these progressive bodies' terms or the actual event has proven difficult if sufficient change has not also been made to the broader environment. Still, indicators suggest that gains in voice and accountability have been generally maintained over time.

III. Conclusions

Conclusion 1: UNDP has made significant contributions towards strengthening electoral systems and processes.

35. UNDP assistance has been instrumental to holding credible elections in complex post-conflict environments and amidst sensitive political transitions. In some cases, elections would not have happened without UNDP assistance. Its development perspective, larger democratic governance programme portfolio, long-term relationships with host governments and United Nations system status afford UNDP with the standing, expertise and moral authority to advise countries on these sensitive and highly political national processes. This position also confers upon UNDP the legitimacy to represent the international community in its collective efforts to support national electoral processes and help ensure they meet international standards. In fulfilling this role, UNDP has provided a highly valued service and contributed to the global expansion of democratic practices. At the same time, the results achieved remain predominately of a technical nature.

Conclusion 2: The UNDP framework for electoral assistance is well conceived and enables an effective response, if applied appropriately.

36. The evaluation findings validated the UNDP electoral assistance framework. UNDP was most effective at promoting sustainable and credible electoral processes, systems and institutions when electoral assistance was integrated into a more holistic package of support. Such support targeted the enabling environment alongside the technical aspects of the process, integrating a long-term vision for the end result of all assistance. Successful efforts combined soft and hard assistance, targeted policy makers and technical implementers, and strengthened the range of entry points and their ability to contribute to a stronger, more democratic process. UNDP efforts were more successful when its support went beyond electoral management body assistance to also strengthen other key stakeholders within civil society, legislature, political parties and the media. This package of assistance did not come entirely from UNDP or from any one group, but rather combined and coordinated the efforts of national and international actors and institutions. Successful efforts also placed the strengthening of electoral processes at the centre of the larger process of strengthening democratic governance. However, more systematic and sustained efforts to implement this type of longer-term holistic support are needed.

Conclusion 3: The impact of the UNDP contribution is reduced when normative United Nations values are not consistently applied in electoral programming and implementation.

37. UNDP is most effective when its assistance is grounded in the normative United Nations values for democratic development. UNDP is the only organization able to concurrently represent national and international interests, situate individual pieces of assistance within a broader framework of electoral and democratic development, and provide this larger sense of purpose. In this regard, UNDP is irreplaceable. As an institution, UNDP has fully embraced this role, which is clearly reflected in its strategic plans and programme guidelines. However, this is not as evident at the country level, where the sense of purpose seems to depend more on the individual perspectives of Resident Representatives and Chief Technical Advisors and, within United Nations mission contexts, on the role that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Electoral Assistance Department envision for UNDP, rather than on delivering a consistent institutional response. Where such sense of purpose is missing from country-level programmes, UNDP credibility and its ability to make a meaningful difference is seriously undermined.

Conclusion 4: The building of cost-effective, context-appropriate and sustainable solutions is not consistently prioritized, limiting the effectiveness of UNDP efforts to build national ownership in the electoral processes.

38. Elections have become expensive undertakings. Some support, particularly in countries that received large-scale mission assistance, has resulted in the creation of systems that some of them cannot afford or manage without continued international assistance. As such, UNDP should focus on promoting more affordable and context-appropriate electoral systems and on building national capacity to manage them, thus avoiding a perpetual cycle of assistance and dependence. These are stated UNDP objectives and entry points, but they are not always put into practice as a result of the continuing event focus, unrealistic timelines and lack of national or international interest in the longer-term developmental aspects of electoral assistance. In addition, sustainability requires widespread national support for political processes. Ownership issues that manifest around the electoral process, such as low participation or conflict, will continue if not addressed, threatening democratic advances and their sustainability.

Conclusion 5: Procedures are not sufficiently adapted to the fast-paced needs of electoral support, adversely affecting UNDP performance and relevance.

39. This is a systemic UNDP issue that affects electoral assistance from initial decisions on the type of assistance to provide (a process that involves the Electoral Assistance Department and UNDP timing issues) to finding the right people to staff a project and procuring equipment or materials within the tight timeline of an electoral calendar. Procedural shortcomings in this area are also related to the lack of effective systems to ensure implementation guidelines are used at the country level, to maintain institutional memory in the country office, and to provide donors with accurate, sufficiently detailed and timely reporting on project performance and use of funds. Unless UNDP becomes more efficient, it will find it increasingly difficult to find donor support for its programmes—particularly in non-mission contexts, where other credible electoral assistance bodies can provide technical support.

Conclusion 6: UNDP partnerships affect its performance and may, in some cases, need to be framed differently from those of other UNDP programmes.

40. The government is the most important institutional partner for the UNDP country office in its development programme. However, in an electoral competition, the government is usually an actor in the electoral race and has a stake in the outcome. This changes the dynamics of the relationship and requires UNDP to respond first and foremost to national needs for a credible electoral process rather than government priorities, which are not necessarily identical. Although electoral management bodies are the most likely UNDP counterparts for providing electoral assistance, and the United Nations framework allows such bodies to submit national requests for assistance, many country offices are reluctant to provide assistance without the official approval from the executive for the content of the assistance programme. At the global level, UNDP efforts to develop partnerships with the European Union and others have effectively expanded the organization's reach. However, the substance of these partnerships needs to be better coordinated and leveraged at the country level. Within the United Nations system, the partnership with the Electoral Assistance Department should be better defined at the operational level, in order to not limit UNDP ability to design and implement a development-focused electoral assistance programme.

IV. Recommendations

A. Institutional and strategic direction setting

Recommendation 1: UNDP should intensify efforts to build the shared sense of purpose among headquarter, country-office and project teams, and to improve their understanding of the UNDP approach and programming options for electoral assistance.

41. UNDP should ensure that its institutional frameworks, vision for electoral assistance, and how these fit within the broader United Nations electoral assistance framework are more fully understood by staff and key stakeholders working at the country level. This should include training for country office and project staff on how UNDP promotes the normative United Nations values and fulfils an impartial role in the provision of electoral assistance. UNDP should better leverage the considerable amount of its knowledge products and in-house expertise through more systematic dissemination, networking efforts, and follow-up to its community of practice meetings. UNDP should also consider more intensive and comprehensive induction training—on the organization's institutional vision and implementation guidelines electoral assistance—for new Resident Representatives, Chief Technical Advisors, senior country office management and governance unit staff

Recommendation 2: UNDP should assess the way it frames relationships with national authorities for electoral projects, and develop a model of a long standing relationship within a country that embodies United Nations impartiality.

42. UNDP should guard its reputation as an impartial provider of electoral assistance, because this reputation can play a critical role in managing local political dynamics while promoting the broader requirements of electoral integrity. UNDP should ensure that its involvement in an electoral process serves as a mark of legitimacy, providing confidence to electoral management bodies to take the right decisions and dissuading nondemocratic forces from making frivolous claims or disrupting the process. UNDP should ensure that all country offices are aware of the option of providing support based on a request from an electoral management body. UNDP should focus its technical and normative assets on strengthening these independent institutions to enhance their standing in society and reinforce the political role they play as arbiters of the electoral contest.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should ensure a more consistent grounding of electoral assistance in the broader democratic governance framework to better incorporate the values of that framework.

43. UNDP should more firmly ground electoral assistance in its larger democratic governance programme to give more meaning to its support. Specifically, this means working more systematically to build synergies among different democratic governance programmes, some of which may already be assisting women's groups, civil society advocates, media, political parties and members of parliament. This process should start by taking advantage of existing opportunities and becoming more systematized as part of the Country Programme Action Plan process. This requires better diagnosis of governance issues and designing the governance programme, including electoral assistance, around that analysis. In contexts marked by a lack of political will, and where repeated electoral technical assistance has not resulted in the envisioned outcomes, UNDP should ensure that country offices are given full headquarter and regional support through mentoring and backstopping. In cases where there is no political will for competitive multi-party processes, UNDP should carefully assess its support options, as assisting parts of a process under such circumstances is tacit approval of them. Country offices with upcoming electoral events should be prioritized for training on the organization's new political economy-based analysis and on how to integrate this political analysis into soft and hard assistance. Strengthening contextual analyses and integrating early warning systems into electoral assistance programming could help country offices and regional bureaux identify potential triggers for electoral conflict and develop mitigation and prevention responses at the policy and technical levels.

Recommendation 4: Beyond addressing technical needs, UNDP programmes should strategically focus on the areas of critical need for credible, inclusive processes.

44. UNDP should be strategic in the choice of areas where it offers assistance. It should concentrate on ensuring that the most essential needs of the process are covered through its mobilization and coordination role, and, in conjunction with national and international partners, determine which partners are best placed and able to address specific needs. This process should be based on sound analysis of the political and electoral context, prioritization of needs and a clear exit strategy. UNDP should ensure that its own programmes effectively leverage its United Nations status, multinational nature and development mandate, and that such programmes focus directly on strengthening the credibility of the processes assisted. In particular, UNDP should do more to exploit its convening capabilities and its comparative advantage of facilitating national dialogue on needed electoral reforms and reducing the winner-takes-all nature of electoral systems. Strengthening multiparty political systems should be a part of this process.

Recommendation 5: UNDP should prioritize efforts to clarify the application of the United Nations electoral assistance policy framework to more effectively fulfil the institutional mandate of development assistance.

45. UNDP should seek to resolve the differences arising from the application of the United Nations electoral assistance policy framework where it affects UNDP ability to fulfil its development mandate. Senior UNDP managers should engage with the United Nations Focal Point to discuss these issues and seek a synergistic application of the framework so that UNDP, as well as other United Nations organizations, are able to make the best use of their institutional mandates in support of these important national processes. UNDP should continue its efforts through the Inter-Agency Coordinating Mechanism on Electoral Assistance to resolve operational issues.

B. Programmatic improvements

Recommendation 6: UNDP should strengthen implementation of electoral cycle projects so they are able to retain their process-oriented focus.

46. UNDP should strengthen its efforts to fully implement electoral cycle projects by focusing on the process alongside the event. UNDP should provide country offices, Chief Technical Advisors and project teams with training on the electoral cycle approach, improve dissemination of implementation guidelines, and promote increased networking and peer-to-peer exchanges among electoral management bodies and civil society organizations in the periods between electoral events. UNDP should also leverage the range of entry points in an electoral cycle approach to reach media, political parties, legislators and others to strengthen the process and promote the independence of electoral management bodies, whether they are formally independent or part of the executive branch. UNDP country offices should also be more proactive in the period between elections to maintain relationships with such bodies and election-oriented civil society organization (such as local observer groups) to promote improvements in electoral processes, electoral dispute resolution mechanisms, electoral management body independence and electoral law. Engagement with donors regarding post-election activities should begin long before the electoral event, in order to avoid losing momentum in the crucial months after an election. A post-election strategy that places due emphasis on sustainability and an exit strategy should be prepared as part of any election assistance project document.

Recommendation 7: More emphasis and effort are needed to reduce the costs of some of the supported processes and ensure they are context-appropriate and sustainable.

47. UNDP should renew and re-energize its efforts to develop cost-effective, sustainable solutions for electoral processes and institutions, and to build the national ownership needed to manage and maintain these systems. UNDP should facilitate the development of local solutions for local problems and avoid over-reliance on expensive imports, including inappropriately high-tech solutions implemented in low-tech contexts. UNDP should increase focus on strengthening national and, where relevant, sub-national capacity and expertise for strategic planning, management, timely procurement and budgeting. Appropriate benchmarking, monitoring and budgetary controls should be considered to help foster cost-awareness. Elections are big business for some, particularly for vendors, and UNDP should assist electoral management bodies and civil society organizations in developing transparent and accountable procedures that reduce opportunities for economic and political corruption.

Recommendation 8: UNDP should streamline its electoral assistance processes to ensure that they are more efficient in the fast-paced environment of the electoral process they support.

48. UNDP should review the chain of its electoral support processes from conceptualization to assistance delivery. Some procedural and efficiency issues are internal to UNDP, while others stem from the larger United Nations framework of response and require resolution. In particular, this applies to the relationship between UNDP and the Electoral Assistance Department and the extent of the latter's authority over UNDP programmes. Timelines to review include those pertaining to the receipt and processing of assistance requests, needs assessments and selection of their participants, and project formulation, negotiation and adoption. UNDP should also closely examine and streamline its recruitment and procurement processes. In addition, UNDP should encourage: the development of impact analysis for its work; a standard template to better track, monitor and report on the accomplishments of projects and their costs by intended outcomes; and more systematic efforts to document and share UNDP institutional memory. UNDP regional bureaux and the Bureau for Development Policy should strengthen oversight and monitoring of electoral programmes and improve the capacity of concerned staff, particularly for problematic processes or projects.

United Nations DP/2012/22

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services

Distr.: General
14 June 2012

Original: English

Second regular session 2012
4 to 10 September, New York
Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Evaluation

Management response to the evaluation of the UNDP contribution to strengthening electoral systems and processes

Context and background

1. UNDP promotes democratic governance for its intrinsic value in advancing rights, principles and justice and for its agency towards larger human development in which people have a crucial say in the decisions that affect their lives. Strong and accountable institutions must be balanced with strong and inclusive civic engagement, just as credible and inclusive elections must go hand in hand with efforts to ensure that all people have the opportunity to participate in the political life of their countries. For this reason, UNDP promotes democratic governance through three areas of work: inclusive participation, responsive institutions and international principles. As per its current strategic plan 2008-2013, UNDP works to foster inclusive participation by strengthening civic engagement at the local, regional and national levels. Mechanisms and opportunities for this engagement include electoral laws, institutions and processes, mobilization channels (such as political parties and civil society organizations), and communications channels (access to information networks, e-governance and independent media). Within the specific service area of electoral assistance, UNDP supports the electoral laws, processes and institutions that strengthen inclusive participation and professional electoral administration.

2. The main trend in electoral assistance over the past decade has been the widespread adoption of the electoral cycle approach, a tool that UNDP has been in the forefront of promoting. This approach has its roots in the realization that electoral assistance providers were supporting isolated, one-off events every four or five years but not building the requisite capacity, sustainability and national ownership that would allow programme countries to run elections on their own, credibly, with progressively less international support. Despite the wealth of knowledge and experience acquired through electoral assistance initiatives, donor and United Nations interventions were often guided more by isolated, short-term policy objectives than by long-term, broad development cooperation strategies. Focusing on election events also made it difficult to integrate electoral assistance into the broader democratic governance agenda.

12-37656 (E) 020712

Please recycle

3. UNDP formally adopted the electoral cycle approach as its modus operandi following the meeting it hosted in November 2004 of the United Nations and non-United Nations electoral community-of-practice whose members recommended that the electoral cycle approach would be more effective in achieving UNDP goals as a development organization. The cycle approach emphasizes engaging in a country over a longer period of time than simply one election, and it features engagement with a variety of actors and entry points, including, but going beyond, the electoral management body (EMB). It also acknowledges the importance of election events and supporting them but provides the means to do so within a larger framework.

4. In 2011, UNDP provided electoral cycle assistance to approximately 60 countries, just under half of which also received UNDP elections support. In responding to demand, 65 per cent of country offices are using the electoral cycle approach in programming. To support this effort, UNDP launched a three-year, $35 million Global Programme on Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS) in 2009 to help countries improve their electoral laws, processes and institutions and to enhance the participation of women in electoral processes. Electoral assistance consistently accounts for a high degree of expenditure within democratic governance, which means that, given the relatively small number of country offices with projects in the area compared to other governance areas, each electoral project has a comparatively high average expenditure.

5. In light of the highly political nature of elections, the General Assembly in 1991 appointed the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) as United Nations focal point for electoral assistance. This role was intended to provide a consistent response to requests by Member States for electoral assistance and to channel such requests to the appropriate responder within the United Nations system. UNDP core technical electoral assistance capacity has increased steadily over the past 20 years and its development agenda, democratic governance expertise and coordination responsibility together position it to play the lead electoral assistance provider role in non-peacekeeping/political mission settings. The current division of labour between DPA and UNDP in electoral assistance is as follows: DPA provides normative policy, standard and electoral assistance parameter setting and UNDP provides leadership in the provision of technical assistance, advisory services and lessons learned. Mission contexts are distinct in that a mission is usually given an electoral mandate by the Security Council, which defines the United Nations role over and above what UNDP will do through the country programme. Other important partnerships in electoral assistance include United Nations Volunteers (UNV), which provides key personnel who deliver electoral assistance in many contexts, in particular post-conflict settings, and UN Women, with which UNDP works to promote women's political participation.

6. In recognition of the key role electoral institutions and processes play in achieving development and democratic governance results, the UNDP 2012 annual business plan (ABP) includes electoral assistance among its 12 corporate annual priorities.

Achievements, recommendations and the way forward

7. Electoral assistance is a mature service area for UNDP. The organization has built up a considerable body of knowledge and expertise at the headquarters, regional and country levels. All of these levels make combined up a community of practice consisting of some 100 practitioners for whom providing electoral assistance represents the majority of their functions either through a country-specific project or in an advisory capacity. This community is further enlarged by the wider democratic governance community, which at times deals with electoral support as well.

8. UNDP has developed knowledge and good practices in the field of electoral assistance, including on themes such as elections and conflict, political party engagement, women's political participation, and use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in elections. For example, in 2011-2012 in partnership with the National Democratic Institute, UNDP developed a "Best Practices Guidebook for Political Parties to Promote Women's Political Participation" – now considered the global handbook on how political parties can promote women's political participation throughout the electoral cycle.

9. Within the United Nations itself and even beyond, strong partnerships have formed around electoral assistance-related work, with electoral assistance providers in the north and south and through global initiatives such as the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network and Building Resources for Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE). UNDP has also developed strong partnerships with bilateral and multilateral institutions, including most notably with the European Union, with which UNDP developed operational guidelines to help European Union delegations and UNDP country offices work together in the field better. By serving as the custodian of donor funds for electoral assistance, UNDP has developed the capacity to manage large and complex basket funds by bringing the fund and partnership management aspects together with strong technical expertise.

10. The evaluation provides a comprehensive and positive review of the role and achievements of UNDP in electoral assistance and clearly states that: UNDP assistance has been instrumental in the holding of credible elections in complex, post-conflict environments and sensitive political transitions; its contribution resulted in more professional electoral management, more inclusive processes and more credible elections than would have been the case without its assistance; and in some cases elections simply would not have happened without UNDP support and that of its donors and partners. It also states that UNDP is the only organization able to represent national as well as international interests, situate the pieces of assistance within the broader framework of electoral and democratic development and provide this larger sense of purpose, which are all factors that make UNDP 'irreplaceable'.

11. At the same time, the evaluation points to certain areas where UNDP can strengthen its impact. These include integrating electoral assistance more into democratic governance programming; ensuring that the electoral cycle is properly applied; connecting better the UNDP principles-based framework for electoral assistance with country office realities; looking at key partnerships; advocating more consistently for cost-effective and sustainable technological solutions; and improving internal efficiencies.

12. Before addressing the recommendations on their merits, it is useful to distinguish between what is within UNDP control to address versus what is beyond it, as well as what recommendations relate to UNDP support to electoral systems and processes per se versus what recommendations go beyond it, either into broader democratic governance support or to the overall 'rules of game'. These distinctions are important in order to shape the management response in terms of tangible, specific and implementable actions that effectively address the recommendations.

13. For example, the first recommendation notes that UNDP needs to intensify its efforts to build a shared sense of purpose between headquarters, country offices and projects, as well as to improve general understanding of its approach and programming. This is a key objective of the agenda for organizational change (AOC) launched in 2011, which seeks to improve the performance and consistency of UNDP in all areas. The second

recommendation notes that UNDP should find a way to frame its relationships with national authorities so as to balance United Nations impartiality with long-standing relationships in country. This recommendation, while relevant for electoral assistance, addresses an institutional challenge of the resident coordinator system and speaks to the difficulty of reconciling the different demands placed on the United Nations representative by national counterparts, international partners and the United Nations system itself. At the same time, UNDP has always been credited with being impartial by a broad spectrum of national and international actors.

14. As a highly decentralized organization that engages closely with host governments, UNDP adapts its approach from country to country based on the needs and entry points available. It may not always be possible to adhere to a single approach and country offices may programme electoral assistance in a way that reflects the opening available to them. Therefore, the issue may be less a lack of understanding in the UNDP approach and its options so much as a conscious choice based on contextual limitations. In responding to these recommendations UNDP will balance the need for consistency with the specific needs of the country. Nevertheless, management does take the point that more effort should be made to ensure that policy guidance informs programming and leads to more even performance – for example, by making routine the participation of regional service centre and headquarters (New York and Brussels) electoral and governance advisors in the needs assessment and project formulation processes, particularly if the country office and/or its management are new to electoral assistance. Another option is to encourage country offices to share more systematically electoral assistance projects under development with relevant policy advisors for quality assurance feedback. This may also include gender advisors to ensure that gender equality concerns are routinely addressed in electoral assistance projects.

15. The evaluation also makes two complementary recommendations: first, that UNDP should strengthen its implementation of the electoral cycle approach and, second, that it should develop upfront clear exit strategies when beginning electoral support. As pointed out by the evaluation, a major factor affecting implementation of the electoral cycle approach is 'discordant donor priorities' at country level. A review of budgets reveals that UNDP multi-year projects that aim to work primarily on electoral capacity development over the entire electoral cycle still spend on average $0.50 of every dollar on election-specific support, pointing to the pervasiveness of the election event agenda. This can affect the timeliness and availability of donor funding in the 'inter-election' period in small and large programmes; for example, in contexts as different as Afghanistan and the Maldives, where electoral cycle initiatives were designed years before elections but languished because of lack of donor funds. Late funding can effectively transform an electoral cycle project into an election-specific one. It can also drive up budgets. For example, when procurement processes are undertaken shortly before an election rather than with time to spare, the options are greatly reduced, sometimes making the most expensive solution the only viable option. Other challenges in effectively implementing the electoral cycle approach include setting up semi-permanent electoral management bodies or late appointment of electoral commissioners; the reluctance of some governments to work in the immediate post-electoral period; and the preference to invest in 'core' areas such as electoral management body support rather than 'complementary' areas such as political party, electoral dispute, civil society or media support.

16. Notwithstanding the challenges of implementing the electoral cycle approach, management agrees that UNDP does not place sufficient emphasis in its project design on establishing clear nationally owned benchmarks for progress in capacities and

institution building that would call for a reduction and eventual cessation of international support. UNDP has seen that full implementation of the cycle approach reduces electoral project budgets over time – including spending on election day support – and UNDP staff providing in-country assistance. Some Member States, such as Brazil, Mexico and South Africa, have transformed from 'net importers' of United Nations electoral assistance to providers of expertise and South-South support. In such cases, the role of UNDP has evolved from that of technical assistance provider to broker of knowledge, standards, partnerships and information. In other cases, such as in the Pro-PALOP[1] and SADC-ECF[2] regional projects, UNDP brokers South-South exchanges among electoral management bodies. In responding to this recommendation, UNDP needs to address a two-fold challenge: how to work together as a development community to implement the electoral cycle approach in a manner that addresses the challenges while planning in a more purposeful manner; and, as national capacities are built, recalibrating UNDP assistance in order to render electoral assistance redundant.

17. Key actions proposed in response to the findings build on on-going work in many areas and comprise four types of initiatives: (a) *policy*: finalize with DPA the guidelines for needs assessments and provide quality assurance support to country offices designing electoral assistance; (b) *programming*: plan earlier and bring operational expertise to bear at the inception phase, design electoral assistance using institutional and context analysis, build capacity of project managers to raise and advocate regional and international norms and standards in a variety of political contexts, and build on good practices of integrating electoral assistance with other areas of governance; (c) *knowledge*: finalize lessons learning exercises on long-term/electoral cycle and integrated electoral assistance, promote more cross-regional knowledge sharing and sharing of experiences between UNDP senior managers, and promote greater use of the electoral community of practice; and (c) *partnerships*: clarify the division of roles and responsibilities in the United Nations system through follow up with the Policy Committee of the Secretary-General, use strategic analysis in needs assessments of what UNDP should do vis-à-vis other actors, and better engage DPA on the political front.

18. UNDP will continue to advocate for the electoral cycle approach and to deepen and refine understanding within the electoral community of practice of how this approach contributes to national capacity, ownership, sustainability and cost effectiveness in electoral processes. The findings and recommendations of the on-going UNDP study to codify "Lessons learned on the longer-term impact of United Nations electoral assistance", which looks at Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Georgia, Liberia, Mexico, Mozambique and the occupied Palestinian territories, will be critical in this respect. Routine UNDP participation in DPA-led needs assessment missions will also help ensure that the parameters of electoral assistance take into account the longer-term, capacity development perspective and linkages to democratic governance from the outset. In addition, the pre-electoral, electoral and post-electoral assessments that UNDP undertakes as a matter of course throughout the programming cycle will place greater emphasis on sustainability, ownership, capacity and cost effectiveness.

19. The evaluation also highlights that UNDP has begun to promote more systematically the empowerment of women in the electoral cycle. This support has ranged from ensuring support for women to participate as voters, building capacity for women candidates and reviewing electoral legislation to promoting women's inclusion through,

[1] Project in Support of Electoral Cycles in African Portuguese-speaking Countries and Timor-Leste (PALOP-TL).

[2] South African Development Community Electoral Commissions Forum.

for example, temporary special measures or quotas. However, it notes that achievements in gender programming in electoral assistance have greatly depended on the commitment of individuals, notably chief technical advisors (CTAs). The evaluation, however, also notes that progress has been made through GPECS, which prioritizes gender as one of four key entry points in electoral assistance and provides dedicated financial and human resources, including technical expertise on gender and elections at a senior level. The UNDP Gender Steering and Implementation Committee (GSIC) has also commended the success of the GPECS model in mainstreaming gender. Therefore, UNDP will continue to ensure that gender is mainstreamed systemically in electoral assistance.

20. UNDP will also make use of new tools and approaches in its electoral assistance work. For example, adapting the new institutional and contextual analysis tool to the specific area of electoral assistance will help to design electoral assistance and deepening democracy programmes so that the political settlement is sufficiently addressed from the outset. UNDP will continue and make greater use of integrated approaches to designing electoral assistance that draw on all parts of the house in countries such as Kenya, where the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA), Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) and Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), with the country office and regional centre, have come together to design a strategic framework for programming around the next elections.

21. Building on significant work done in recent years, UNDP will continue to explore appropriate use of information technology in electoral management and advocate for informed decisions that lead to sustainable outcomes. This will involve ensuring that adequate internal capacity exists in UNDP to advise programme countries on the planning, management, procurement, operations, budgeting and inter-institutional collaboration required when introducing new technologies. While UNDP will do all it can to limit costs in electoral assistance and will look at how this can be done better, timely availability of funding would help to keep costs low.

22. UNDP will also continue to explore ways of improving the efficiency of its delivery. While UNDP has put in place strong systems and tools, making its operational processes among the fastest and leanest in the United Nations system, it can do more to encourage early planning and to build absorptive capacity of country offices taking on the increased burden of recruitment, procurement and financial management that often comes with electoral assistance. UNDP will encourage greater use of fast track procedures for country offices providing support to elections. UNDP will also seek to improve the efficiency of delivery through participation in the Operational Support Working Group launched by the Policy Committee of the Secretary-General. This group comprises DPA, Department of Field Services (DFS), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), UNOPS and UNDP and will make recommendations on how to improve the efficiency of United Nations operational response in elections. UNDP will also explore the comprehensiveness and accuracy of electoral assistance reporting, in particular in the results-oriented annual report (ROAR).

23. UNDP welcomes this evaluation and appreciates the lessons that it provides for continuous organizational improvements. The annex on the following pages outlines the evaluation's main recommendations and the UNDP responses.

List of acronyms

ABP	annual business plan
AOC	agenda for organizational change
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
CPD	country programme document
CPAP	country programme action plan
CSO	civil society organization
CTA	chief technical advisor
DFS	Department of Field Services
DGG	Democratic Governance Group
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
EAD	Electoral Assistance Division (of DPA)
EMB	electoral management body
ICMEA	Inter-Agency Coordinating Mechanism on Electoral Assistance
ICT	information and communication technology
NAM	needs assessment mission
PALOP	*Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa* (Portuguese speaking African countries)
PSO	Procurement Support Office
ROAR	results-oriented annual report
RSC	regional service centre
SADC-ECF	Electoral Commissions Forum of the Southern African Development Community
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNV	United Nations Volunteers

Annex. Key recommendations and management response

Recommendation 1: UNDP should intensify efforts to build the shared sense of purpose among headquarter, country office and project teams, and to improve their understanding of the UNDP approach and programming options for electoral assistance. UNDP should ensure that its institutional frameworks, vision for electoral assistance and how these fit within the broader United Nations electoral assistance framework are more fully understood by staff and key stakeholders working at the country level. This should include training for country office and project staff on how UNDP promotes the normative United Nations values and fulfils an impartial role in the provision of electoral assistance. UNDP should better leverage the considerable amount of its knowledge products and in-house expertise through more systematic dissemination, networking efforts and follow-up to its community of practice meetings. UNDP should also consider more intensive and comprehensive induction training – on the organization's institutional vision and implementation guidelines electoral assistance – for new resident representatives, chief technical advisers, senior country office management and governance unit staff.

Management response: This recommendation is very much in line with the UNDP AOC, which calls for improving performance 'from good to great' so that UNDP programming and implementation consistently lead to positive impact. The AOC means that UNDP will use the best configuration of knowledge, policy, programme and corporate services to support consistently high quality electoral assistance delivery at the country level. The actions proposed here form part of a larger organizational effort that goes beyond addressing the issues raised in the present evaluation and that seeks to standardize UNDP performance on the ground – not just in the area of elections but overall. UNDP will do more to make policies and guidance easily available – in particular through Teamworks – to encourage cross-regional information sharing. UNDP will also make greater use of in-house expertise through a strengthened quality assurance function for electoral assistance design, in particular by regional centre and headquarters advisors. UNDP will also make greater use of regional electoral workshops and trainings to contribute to consistency and effectiveness. Finally, senior country office leadership plays a particularly important role in framing the dialogue with the government on UNDP electoral assistance and will be engaged more through management/cluster meetings and training to build coherence.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Improve cross-regional collaboration to share lessons and approaches in UNDP electoral assistance such as during global management meetings and regional bureau/cluster meetings.	On-going	Regional bureaux, BDP, regional centres		
1.2 Develop a stronger quality assurance role in the design of electoral assistance projects that makes use of in-house expertise.	Within 1 year	BDP and BCPR, with regional bureaux		
1.3 Ensure electoral policies and guidance are easily available, accessible and frequently updated using the Teamworks platform and other methods.	Within 6 months	BDP		
1.4 Ensure UNDP input to DPA/EAD-produced guidelines on needs assessment missions and types and principles of United Nations electoral assistance and ensure their distribution to country offices.	Within 3 months	BDP (engaging DPA), regional bureaux		

Recommendation 2: UNDP should assess the way it frames relationships with national authorities for electoral projects and develop a model that embodies United Nations impartiality within its long-standing relationship within a country. UNDP should guard its reputation as an impartial provider of electoral assistance, because this reputation can play a critical role in managing local political dynamics while promoting the broader requirements of electoral integrity. UNDP should ensure that its involvement in an electoral process serves as a mark of legitimacy, providing confidence to electoral management bodies to take the right decisions and dissuading nondemocratic forces from making frivolous claims or disrupting the process. UNDP should ensure that all country offices are aware of the option of providing support based on a request from an electoral management body. UNDP should focus its technical and normative assets on strengthening these independent institutions to enhance their standing in society and reinforce the political role they play as arbiters of the electoral contest.

Management response: It is the DPA-led needs assessment process that continues to set the parameters of UNDP electoral assistance and requests from EMBs are still considered exceptional, with the executive branch more often seen as the initiator of such requests to the United Nations. UNDP will advocate more to consider the EMB as a routine source of electoral requests. Electoral assistance – like democratic governance and even development – features both political and technical dimensions. UNDP believes that the solution to political challenges in the electoral field is not to distinguish further between the political and technical dimensions, but rather to manage the political aspects in a manner that allows UNDP to maintain the highest level of impartiality. This can entail calling on DPA services when and as needed. In peacekeeping or mission contexts, this will mean clearly distinguishing the lead political role of the mission from the technical role that UNDP plays, while designing the technical assistance to take into account the political context. UNDP will explore ways to sensitize senior UNDP officials more on the lessons learned with respect to the political-technical relationship and to what role DPA can provide. UNDP electoral assistance projects usually feature clear reporting lines of CTAs to the UNDP country office (normally to the head of governance or to the senior country office management) in order to reinforce the chain of accountability and communication through which electoral assistance is closely aligned to the UNDP country office's democratic governance work.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Sensitize senior country office and electoral staff – taking advantage of inductions of resident coordinators, country directors and deputy country director and other opportunities – to the fact that they can rely on DPA to provide political support or interventions on international norms and standards.	On-going	Learning Resource Centre, United Nations Staff College, regional bureaux, country offices, BDP		
2.2 Finalize lessons learned study with DPA and DPKO on integrated electoral assistance for recommendations on the division of labour between missions and UNDP.	Third quarter 2012	BDP (engaging DPA and DPKO), BCPR		
2.3 Input to DPA/EAD-drafted needs assessment mission and principles and type of electoral assistance guidelines to expand consideration of requests for electoral assistance from EMBs.	Second quarter 2012	BDP (engaging DPA), BCPR and regional bureaux		

Recommendation 3: UNDP should ensure a more consistent grounding of electoral assistance in the broader democratic governance framework to better incorporate the values of that framework. UNDP should more firmly ground electoral assistance in its larger democratic governance programme to give more meaning to its support. Specifically, this means working more systematically to build synergies among different democratic governance programmes, some of which may already be assisting women's groups, civil society advocates, media, political parties and members of parliament. This process should start by taking advantage of existing opportunities and becoming more systematized as part of the country programme action plan process. This requires better diagnosis of governance issues and designing the governance programme, including electoral assistance, around that analysis. In contexts marked by a lack of political will, and where repeated electoral technical assistance has not resulted in the envisioned outcomes, UNDP should ensure that country offices are given full headquarters and regional support through mentoring and backstopping. In cases where there is no political will for competitive multi-party processes, UNDP should carefully assess its support options, as assisting parts of a process under such circumstances is tacit approval of them. Country offices with upcoming electoral events should be prioritized for training on the organization's new political economy-based analysis and on how to integrate this political analysis into soft and hard assistance. Strengthening contextual analyses and integrating early warning systems into electoral assistance programming could help country offices and regional bureaux to identify potential triggers for electoral conflict and develop mitigation and prevention responses at the policy and technical levels.

Management response: Elections are one input into UNDP democracy and governance work. In and of themselves, elections offer value as a unique and sufficient development goal. However, many linkages between elections and the broader governance framework exist with the electoral cycle approach and ensuring greater traction for the approach will also help to ensure more linkages between electoral assistance and work with political parties, civil society, including women's groups, media, domestic observers, security forces, parliaments and the judiciary. When electoral assistance is identified in the CPD/CPAP, linkages with other areas of UNDP work in country (and regionally) are identified at that time. UNDP will use the findings and recommendations from its study on longer-term electoral assistance to identify ways of using the electoral cycle approach better in environments where focus on the EMB per se may not be yielding the desired results. Similarly, UNDP will use the findings from the study on gender mainstreaming in electoral assistance and other knowledge products to identify key entry for gender mainstreaming in the electoral cycle. UNDP will also make better use of institutional and contextual analysis and collaborative cross bureaux (BDP-BCPR-regional bureaux) approaches to programme development (both country programmes and sector projects). In cases where there is no political will for competitive, multi-party processes, UNDP should carefully assess its options for support. It is crucial that UNDP is fully associated with the political analysis of the NAMs and does not limit its contribution to the design of future potential electoral projects. It is the DPA-led needs assessment process that continues to set the parameters of UNDP electoral assistance and the final decision on whether to assist a country lies with DPA. Country offices should be fully associated with the decision-making the political analysis provided to DPA since they need to take NAM recommendations forward with counterparts and are best placed to highlight the sensitivities and appropriateness of any given support.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
3.1 Adapt the institutional and contextual analysis methodology to the electoral assistance area.	By third quarter 2012	BDP (including OGC)		
3.2 Identify electoral assistance and democratic governance synergies in the CPD/CPAP when possible and at project design phase, in particular in ABP priority countries.	On-going	Regional bureaux, country offices, BDP and BCPR		
3.3 Finalize the lessons learned study on the longer-term impact of United Nations electoral assistance and the study on gender mainstreaming in electoral assistance.	By second quarter 2012	BDP		

Recommendation 4: Beyond addressing technical needs, UNDP programmes should strategically focus on the areas of critical need for credible, inclusive processes. UNDP should be strategic in the choice of areas where it offers assistance. It should concentrate on ensuring that the most essential needs of the process are covered through its mobilization and coordination role and, in conjunction with national and international partners, determine which partners are best placed and able to address specific needs. This process should be based on sound analysis of the political and electoral context, prioritization of needs and a clear exit strategy. UNDP should ensure that its own programmes effectively leverage its United Nations status, multinational nature and development mandate, and that such programmes focus directly on strengthening the credibility of the processes assisted. In particular, UNDP should do more to exploit its convening capabilities and its comparative advantage of facilitating national dialogue on needed electoral reforms and reducing the winner-takes-all nature of electoral systems. Strengthening multiparty political systems should be a part of this process.

Management response: This recommendation assumes that UNDP is trying to do everything everywhere, which is not confirmed by a close reading of what country offices are actually doing in electoral assistance, which tends to be fairly focused. What does bear scrutiny, however, is whether UNDP is taking the most strategic approach in a given context, which is rarely a factor of UNDP decision-making alone. In several countries, UNDP had designed electoral cycle approach projects that prioritized work with actors such as political parties that were deemed essential to peaceful and inclusive elections based on thorough analysis. However, these activities were considered by other actors as 'complementary' and ultimately dropped by the project when funding and priority were instead placed on 'core' electoral management. Greater advocacy therefore needs to be done in-house and with donors to recognize that work with the EMB alone may not be the best or only entry point for UNDP. Donors and EMBs also sometimes come to UNDP as the provider of last resort. This is a role that many will presumably continue to ask of UNDP in general and is not isolated to electoral assistance. In these contexts, the ability of UNDP to respond is highly appreciated by partners, so much so that in some cases if UNDP were to limit its areas of support it may present a reputational risk for the organization. At the same time, UNDP will do more to design electoral assistance projects with clear benchmarks for progress and, where possible, seek to transform and reduce its role over time to meet changing needs. This entails understanding the trajectory of countries that have been net 'importers' of United Nations electoral assistance, but are now providers of peer support, and knowing how UNDP can use the electoral cycle in each context to accompany programme countries along this pathway.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Input on DPA/EAD-drafted needs assessment mission guidelines to identify early UNDP comparative advantages and to eliminate division between 'core' and 'complementary' activities.	Second quarter 2012	BDP (engaging DPA), BCPR and regional bureaux		
4.2 Use the institutional and contextual analysis adapted to electoral assistance to design electoral assistance projects that take into account winner-takes-all politics.	After third quarter 2012, then on-going	Country offices, regional bureaux, BDP, BCPR		
4.3 Use the lessons learned study on the longer-term impact of United Nations electoral assistance to identify strategies for evolving electoral assistance from large-scale technical assistance to partnership over time.	After second quarter 2012, then on-going	BDP, regional bureaux, country offices		

Recommendation 5: UNDP should prioritize efforts to clarify the application of the United Nations electoral assistance policy framework to more effectively fulfil the institutional mandate of development assistance. UNDP should seek to resolve the differences arising from the application of the United Nations electoral assistance policy framework where it affects UNDP ability to fulfil its development mandate. Senior UNDP managers should engage with the United Nations focal point to discuss these issues and seek a synergistic application of the framework so that UNDP, as well as other United Nations organizations, are able to make the best use of their institutional mandates in support of these important national processes. UNDP should continue its efforts through the Inter-Agency Coordinating Mechanism on Electoral Assistance (ICMEA) to resolve operational issues.
Management response: Decisions 2010/23 and 2011/23 of the Policy Committee of the Secretary-General have sought to clarify pending issues of division of labour among different parts of the United Nations system working in electoral assistance, from how policy is formulated to how the United Nations should respond to demands for electoral assistance from Member States. DPA and UNDP have also signed a Note of Guidance on Electoral Assistance (most recently in September 2010) that governs their division of labour in this area. However, differences in interpretation of this guidance continue to affect implementation in the field. These differences largely relate to interpretations of what it means for the United Nations focal point to have a normative and political role in setting the broad parameters of electoral assistance and what it means for UNDP (or other United Nations actors) to take the lead in designing and delivering technical assistance at the request of Member States, respecting these parameters. UNDP will continue to work at the technical level, through the ICMEA, to better collaborate with DPA and share information on approaches used by UNDP at country level with national and international partners to design and deliver electoral assistance. UNDP will also engage through senior management with DPA to ensure that the division of labour and policy guidance in this area is mutually understood and consistently applied by DPA and UNDP in a manner that allows UNDP to deliver on its development mandate.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
5.1 Senior-level UNDP engagement with DPA on the policy framework governing elections and clarification of how to implement Policy Committee guidance.	By third quarter 2012	Executive Office, BDP, BCPR, regional bureaux		
5.2 Participate in the ICMEA regularly to ensure information sharing and mutual understanding of mandates and constraints.	On-going	BDP, with BCPR and regional bureaux		

Recommendation 6: UNDP should strengthen implementation of electoral cycle projects so they are able to retain their process-oriented focus. UNDP should strengthen its efforts to fully implement electoral cycle projects by focusing on the process alongside the event. UNDP should provide country offices, chief technical advisers and project teams with training on the electoral cycle approach, improve dissemination of implementation guidelines and promote increased networking and peer-to-peer exchanges among electoral management bodies and civil society organizations in the period between electoral events. UNDP should also leverage the range of entry points in an electoral cycle approach to reach media, political parties, legislators and others to strengthen the process and promote the independence of electoral management bodies, whether they are formally independent or part of the executive branch. UNDP country offices should also be more proactive in the period between elections to maintain relationships with such bodies and election-oriented civil society organizations (such as local observer groups) to promote improvements in electoral processes, electoral dispute resolution mechanisms, electoral management body independence and electoral law. Engagement with donors regarding post-election activities should begin long before the electoral event, in order to avoid losing momentum in the crucial months after an election. A post-election strategy that places due emphasis on sustainability and an exit strategy should be prepared as part of any election assistance project document.

Management response: The electoral cycle approach is being used by more than half of UNDP country offices undertaking electoral assistance. Some of the constraints in fully implementing the approach, however, are beyond UNDP control. These include the timeliness of donor funding and interest, the electoral management framework in place (i.e., whether an electoral administration is permanent or reconstituted before elections), and national funding and interest in the inter-election period. UNDP will endeavour to work on those variables within its control, such as ensuring that guidance on using the approach is available – particularly during the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and CPD drafting stages of programming – and the consistent use of electoral-cycle-savvy staff in the design of electoral assistance projects. GPECS will continue playing a vital role in promoting the electoral cycle approach with both donors and national counterparts by financing long-term initiatives between elections. To date, GPECS has supported electoral processes and institutions in 18 countries with a total allocation of $14 million (11 in Africa, one in Asia and six in the Arab States region). Moreover, regional initiatives, workshops and seminars, geared at advocating the electoral cycle approach, will continue to be organized on a regular basis across all regions.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
6.1 Ensure guidance of policy advisors familiar with the electoral cycle approach is available to country offices when designing and implementing projects and country programmes.	On-going	BDP, BCPR, regional bureaux and country offices		
6.2 Ensure electoral policies and guidance are easily available and in an accessible format that is frequently updated using the Teamworks platform and other methods.	Within 6 months	BDP		
6.3 Continue to foster South-South peer exchanges among electoral management bodies through established projects such as Pro-PALOP and new initiatives such as the SADC-ECF as part of a sustainability strategy.	On-going	Country offices, regional bureaux, BDP		

Recommendation 7: More emphasis and effort are needed to reduce the costs of some of the supported processes and ensure they are context-appropriate and sustainable. UNDP should renew and re-energize its efforts to develop cost-effective, sustainable solutions for electoral processes and institutions, and to build the national ownership needed to manage and maintain these systems. UNDP should facilitate the development of local solutions for local problems and avoid over-reliance on expensive imports, including inappropriate high-tech solutions implemented in low-tech contexts. UNDP should increase focus on strengthening national and, where relevant, subnational capacity and expertise for strategic planning, management, timely procurement and budgeting. Appropriate benchmarking, monitoring and budgetary controls should be considered in order to help foster cost-awareness. Elections are big business for some, particularly for vendors, and UNDP should assist electoral management bodies and civil society organizations in developing transparent and accountable procedures that reduce opportunities for economic and political corruption.				
Management response: Concerns about cost-effectiveness and sustainable solutions apply throughout UNDP work. This is an important consideration in electoral assistance programming but there are also limitations to how well UNDP can manage the costs of electoral assistance when, for example, a country makes a sovereign decision to schedule elections or adopt expensive systems and technologies, a national legal framework calls for certain technology to be used or when funding arrives late and drives up procurement costs. It is also important to realize that in some countries there will be a need for an initial large investment – for example, in a census, in identification cards or in a civil registry system – that will ultimately help to reduce the cost of elections. However, UNDP will step up efforts to help national electoral administrators to understand the implications of selecting technological solutions, including exploring local solutions, and to understand the importance of starting early, since starting late usually equals higher costs. UNDP will make a greater effort to balance economy, efficiency and effectiveness to ensure funds are being spent wisely in pursuit of local priorities. This means not only seeking to reduce costs and run electoral projects better, but also ensuring long-term capacity is built so that programme countries can run credible and sustainable elections on their own with little or no international help. UNDP will continue to organize workshops, conferences and seminars gathering EMBs, electoral practitioners and UNDP staff to raise awareness and to develop policy on issues pertaining to electoral processes. In 2012, a workshop of 230 participants was organized by UNDP in Mombasa, Kenya to highlight the appropriateness and costs of introducing ICTs in electoral process. This provided EMBs, UNDP staff and electoral practitioners with comparative information and data, analysis of timelines and costs, which will allow EMBs to effectively evaluate the choices available and make informed decisions regarding the possible introduction of technology in electoral processes.				
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**
7.1 Develop guidelines based on the Mombasa conference to help national electoral administrators implement ICT solutions in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.	By fourth quarter 2012	BDP, regional bureaux, country offices		
7.2 Continue to place procurement, budgeting and operations advisory support at the disposal of national EMBs and country offices.	On-going	PSO, BDP, country offices		

Recommendation 8: UNDP should streamline its electoral assistance processes to ensure that they are more efficient in the fast paced environment of the electoral process they support. UNDP should review the chain of its electoral support processes from conceptualization to assistance delivery. Some procedural and efficiency issues are internal to UNDP, while others stem from the larger United Nations framework of response and require resolution. In particular, this applies to the relationship between UNDP and the Electoral Assistance Department and the extent of the latter's authority over UNDP programmes. Timelines to review include those pertaining to the receipt and processing of assistance requests, needs assessments and selection of their participants, and project formulation, negotiation and adoption. UNDP should also closely examine and streamline its recruitment and procurement processes. In addition, UNDP should encourage: the development of impact analysis for its work; a standard template to better track, monitor and report on the accomplishments of projects and their costs by intended outcomes; and more systematic efforts to document and share UNDP institutional memory. UNDP regional bureaux and the Bureau for Development Policy should strengthen oversight and monitoring of electoral programmes and improve the capacity of concerned staff, particularly for problematic processes or projects.

Management response: The newly revised needs assessment mission (NAM) guidelines are expected to facilitate the process (and speed) of request receipt, assessment (and who should participate in this process) and project formulation by UNDP, although last minute requests for assistance will continue to be made by Member States. The project formulation process should systematically give timelines for procurement processes, defining what is feasible and what is not. More specifically, UNDP will endeavour to involve operations experts at the project initiation stage, ensure procurement expertise is available throughout the project, draw up a procurement plan early on and make use of fast track procedures where beneficial. UNDP has developed a roster of vetted consultants that country offices may use to speed up the retention of experts. UNDP is committed to learning and improving its systems and approaches and will work towards better monitoring and evaluation in the area, although enhancing institutional memory requires United Nations-wide commitment. Reporting and tracking systems exist and are widely utilized but the reporting on electoral assistance in the ROAR is not fully accurate and includes gaps in the picture of where UNDP is working. On more specific operational issues, UNDP will continue to engage with the Operational Support Working Group (comprising DFS, DPA, DPKO, UNDP, UNOPS) which has been asked by the Policy Committee of the Secretary-General to advise on how to achieve greater efficiencies in system-wide operational support to elections, including in the areas of procurement, logistics, security, human resources and project management.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
8.1 Explore whether a standardized post-election evaluation or lessons learned exercises should be developed.	By end 2012	Evaluation Office, BDP		
8.2 Encourage the use of fast track procedures for electoral assistance and provide support to country offices making use of this modality.	By end 2012	BOM, BCPR, regional bureaux, BDP		
8.3 Explore the more systematic use of the Procurement Support Office to procure goods while promoting greater procurement of local services.	By end 2012	BOM (PSO), country offices, regional bureaux		
8.4 Continue to participate in the Operational Support Working Group to provide recommendations to the Policy Committee on how to improve operational support.	By second quarter 2012	BDP, BCPR		
8.5 Identify ways country offices can more comprehensively reflect electoral assistance in the ROAR/its successor.	By end 2012 and for next strategic plan	Operations Support Group, regional bureaux, country offices, BDP		
8.6 Consider preparing a regular (annual or	Feasibility assessed by end 2012	BDP with partners		

biennial) thematic publication on UNDP support to electoral assistance, which more fully captures electoral support and all of its variations.				

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database.

United Nations DP/2012/23

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services

Distr.: General
23 June 2012

Original: English

Second regular session 2012
4-10 September 2012, New York
Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Evaluation

Evaluation of UNDP partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations

Executive summary

Contents

Chapter		*Page*
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Background	3
III.	Findings	5
IV.	Conclusions	10
V.	Recommendations	13

12-38561 (E) 270612

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. Contemporary development cooperation encompasses a wide range of relationships with different types of partners – governmental, non-governmental and private sector. The diversity of institutions and types of partnership has multiplied over the past two decades. That evolution was based partly on different ways of allocating private resources, including through the establishment of philanthropic foundations, to mitigate a variety of developmental problems. Another cause was increased earmarking of public funding, as donor countries sought to substantiate the use and impact of taxpayer funds. In some cases, specific development challenges have brought together different types of donors to create 'global funds'. Global funds have been important in supporting health, education and environmental programmes. In many cases, disillusionment with the performance of existing multilateral arrangements embodied by the United Nations and multilateral development banks served as an underlying motivation for the establishment of global funds or philanthropic foundations. A somewhat related aim was to establish mechanisms to provide quick, efficient targeted support where it was most needed.

2. UNDP has engaged with a range of partnership and funding mechanisms in carrying out its mandate to support developing countries. It has established partnerships with a multitude of global funds and philanthropic foundations both globally and at the level of individual programme countries. In addition to providing new opportunities to strengthen support to programme countries on a range of critical issues, developing such partnerships has been crucial in a context of continued uncertainty over the availability of sustained levels of core resources.

3. Different partnership dynamics have resulted in different institutional arrangements at both the corporate and the programme country level. Varying country contexts have led UNDP to engage in partnerships in which it has variously played the role of principal recipient of funds, implementing agency, interlocutor, coordinator and adviser.

4. This report seeks to contribute insights on UNDP partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations. The principal objectives of the evaluation are to (a) assess the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNDP support to the achievement of development results when activities are carried out in partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations; (b) clarify the added value to key stakeholders of UNDP partnerships with global funds and philanthropic foundations and the comparative advantages of working with such funding instruments; and (c) provide actionable recommendations on how UNDP partnerships with global funds and philanthropic foundations could be further developed.

5. Covering the period from 2001 to 2010, the evaluation focuses on partnership, and, thus, on a modality rather than a programme or project. It provides a broad perspective on how partnership arrangements between UNDP and a range of funding instruments have evolved in the context of increasing reliance on non-core resources, as well as on the relative importance of the new funding institutions alongside the traditional multilateral development cooperation system.

6. The evaluation focuses on UNDP partnership with three global funds: (a) the Global Environment Facility (GEF); (b) the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM); (c) the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol; and three philanthropic foundations: (a) the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation; (b) the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and (c) the Open Society Institute/Soros Foundations.

7. The evaluation draws on evidence from 70 UNDP programme countries. A meta-analysis was conducted of evidence pertaining to UNDP partnerships with global funds and philanthropic foundations in 61 UNDP Evaluation Office assessments of development results reports covering 56 UNDP programme countries. In addition, several types of country-level analyses were carried out. Country selection took place against the background of a comprehensive portfolio scan of the financial data pertaining to projects conducted in partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations in all UNDP

programme countries over the past decade. Selection criteria included programmatic relevance over the last five years; coverage of funds and foundations; regional coverage with a particular focus on Africa; and human development experiences through a mix of country typologies.

8. Seven countries were selected for full case studies focusing on global funds – Angola, Burkina Faso, Honduras, Iran, Lebanon, Tajikistan and Zimbabwe; six countries were selected for case studies focusing on philanthropic foundations – Bulgaria, Liberia, Mali, Moldova, Senegal and the United Arab Emirates; and ten countries were selected for telephone interview-based supplementary reviews focusing on both global funds and philanthropic foundations – Belarus, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Jordan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Morocco and Namibia. In addition, data were obtained through a review of evaluations and other key documents related to the performance of UNDP and partner institutions; semi-structured interviews with global-level informants from UNDP and partnering institutions; and a survey of UNDP resident representatives.

II. Background

9. Multilateral aid, primarily through the United Nations, accounted for about 10 per cent of official development assistance in the 1960s. By the 1980s, multilateral aid had grown to around 30 per cent of official development assistance; the percentage has since remained relatively steady. Since 2000, the share of multilateral aid has fallen somewhat, with a growing portion of bilateral aid being channelled through the United Nations and other multilateral funds in the form of non-core ('earmarked') funding. This shift reflects the desire of traditional donors for more control. The past decade saw the growth of additional non-United Nations multilateral funds and the further expansion of existing funds such as GEF and the Multilateral Fund. New private donors entered the aid architecture, with some global funds receiving substantial contributions from private sources (most notably the Gates Foundation). Moreover, the decade saw the emergence of additional official donors, including Brazil, China, India and some of the Arab States.

10. For UNDP, reliance on non-core funding – including from traditional and non-traditional donors, global funds and philanthropic foundations – grew from 19 per cent in 1991 to 80 per cent in 2010. By 2010, out of a total of just over $5 billion, core resources amounted to just under $1 billion. Over the past decade, however, core resources have remained relatively stable in absolute terms, increasing until 2007 and decreasing slightly since. In contrast, non-core resources have increased significantly (though more slowly since 2007), which accounts for the changing ratio of core to non-core resources.

Global funds

11. Since the early 1970s, global funds have been established primarily in the environment and health fields. Most of these funds have been created outside the United Nations system. In the wake of the signing of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer in 1985 and the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer in 1989, a separate mechanism was established to administer the accompanying Multilateral Fund; it became operational in 1991. Also in 1991, GEF was formally approved during preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (known as the 'Rio Summit'). In the last decade, major new multilateral funds have emerged in the field of health. The largest, GFATM, commenced operations within six months of the August 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS. Global fund contributions (from GEF, GFATM and the Multilateral Fund in particular) to UNDP non-core resources have increased from just under $250 million in 2004 to almost $700 million in 2010 (from approximately 8 per cent to about 16 per cent).

12. GEF began as a $1 billion pilot programme that expanded into a partnership among three implementing organizations: The World Bank, UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme. As of 2011, GEF had allocated a total of $9.5 billion, and it is estimated that a further $42 billion in co-financing has been mobilized by donors, recipient

countries and the private sector. UNDP has been one of the GEF key implementing organizations since the inception of the Facility, accounting for approximately one third of total GEF funding. UNDP work with GEF encompasses activities in all GEF focal areas: biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, international waters, land degradation, ozone layer depletion and persistent organic pollutants. The portfolio of work includes projects at the country, regional and global levels.

13. GFATM is a financial instrument that provides performance-based grant funding to country-level recipients to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. As a global partnership among governments, civil society, the private sector and affected communities, GFATM constitutes an innovative approach to international health financing with an original mandate to dramatically scale up global financing. During its almost decade-long existence, GFATM has raised over $20 billion to co-finance prevention, treatment and care programmes in more than 150 countries.

14. UNDP and GFATM have been engaged in a partnership since late 2002. UNDP supports programme implementation by serving as the principal recipient in exceptionally challenging contexts, developing the capacities of national actors to assume or strengthen principal recipient responsibility, and improving policy and programme quality. UNDP has been a major partner in terms of receiving GFATM grants. It has assumed the responsibility of principal recipient in 47 countries since 2002, and the value of signed grant agreements totals some $2 billion.

15. The main objective of the Multilateral Fund is to assist developing countries whose annual per capita consumption and production of ozone-depleting substances is less than 0.3 kg to comply with the control measures of the Montreal Protocol. As of 2011, 147 of the 196 parties to the Protocol are eligible for support. As of April 2011, the contributions, from 45 countries, amounted to more than $2.77 billion. After the establishment of the Multilateral Fund, UNDP entered into an agreement with the Executive Committee of the Fund to serve as an implementing agency. As of 2011, UNDP has provided technical and policy backstopping to country offices and governments and has overseen implementation of over 2,000 Multilateral Fund-financed projects in more than 100 countries. A key objective of UNDP work is to develop the capacities of governments to meet their commitments by phasing out the use of ozone-depleting substances in industrial production, refrigeration servicing, mobile air-conditioning, fire protection and agricultural production.

Philanthropic foundations

16. Individual philanthropy has led to the creation of foundations that have channelled substantial resources into a range of 'causes', including development. There are over 75,000 foundations in the United States, some 85,000 in Western Europe, 35,000 in Eastern Europe, 10,000 in Mexico, nearly 2,000 in China and at least 1,000 in Brazil. Some foundations increasingly see themselves as fully-fledged development partners rather than donors, and expect close involvement in policy discussions, problem analyses and results assessments. Historically, UNDP has had few substantive long-term partnerships with philanthropic foundations. Partnerships with philanthropic foundations have primarily been managed by UNDP country offices.

17. The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation was launched in 2007 with a $10 billion endowment from the Prime Minister and Vice President of the United Arab Emirates and constitutional monarch of Dubai. The foundation promotes entrepreneurship by supporting innovation and research, improving access to high-quality education and professional development, and supporting the production, acquisition and dissemination of Arab knowledge sources. A memorandum of understanding was signed between UNDP and the Al Maktoum Foundation in 2007. To date, with a $5.83 million contribution, the foundation has supported UNDP in developing the 2009 'Arab Knowledge Report' and the 'Arab Human Capital Challenge', two reports that offer a general introduction to the state of the Arab knowledge society and the challenges of fostering employment in Arab states.

18. The Gates Foundation, launched in 1994, has grown to be the largest of its kind in the world. The Gates Foundation channels a significant proportion of its assets into

development programmes, also contributing to the establishment of other multilateral funds and actively supporting United Nations organizations. The Foundation divides its work into three distinct programme areas: global development, global health, and programmes implemented within the United States. UNDP has worked with the Gates Foundation on several projects since it started its operations in 1994. Activities have been implemented on a project-by-project basis, governed by individual memoranda of understanding. A number of initiatives, with a total value of approximately $50 million, are reviewed in the context of this evaluation.

19. Since 1984, when the Soros Foundation established its first non-United States based foundation in Hungary to support the transition from communism, its support to human rights and democracy has expanded rapidly. UNDP signed a memorandum of understanding with the Soros Foundation in 2001 with a view to supporting international development aimed at strengthening democratic institutions. Activities under the partnership have primarily revolved around several democratic governance and human rights projects in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Between 2004 and 2010 UNDP received $14.8 million in contributions from the Soros Foundation.

III. Findings

Global funds

20. **Partnership with global funds is strategically important to UNDP. Not only does it facilitate mobilizing significant volumes of financial support, but it also provides UNDP with opportunities to engage in global policy dialogue, participate in innovative initiatives, and strengthen its own capacity.** The partnerships with global funds have become increasingly relevant to UNDP in monetary terms. The UNDP budget derived from such global funds stands at over $657 million per annum, one-sixth of its non-core revenue. Partnership with global funds allows UNDP to engage in global policy dialogue with governments on a range of issues. Such partnerships have enhanced UNDP technical and operational capacities. Global fund monies have enabled UNDP to develop its country-specific technical expertise in specialized areas and have facilitated innovative work that would not easily be possible through the use of core funds.

21. **Partnership with UNDP is strategically important to global funds. There is a shared commitment to international standards, and UNDP adds significant value to the delivery of global fund initiatives.** UNDP is a key player in all three global funds under review. It has engaged with these funds since their inception: relationships were forged at a strategic level and based on memoranda of understanding and senior-level contacts. A significant portion of each fund goes to partner countries through or with the support of UNDP, which on an annual basis averages approximately 40 per cent of GEF funding, 32 per cent of Multilateral Fund financing, and 10 per cent of GFATM funds.

22. **Initiatives supported through UNDP-global funds partnerships are generally relevant to national priorities. As governments make choices as to how to prioritize development challenges, the specific allocation of resources within the sectoral focus areas of global funds is not always perceived as requiring the most urgent attention.** Global fund projects fit well with national priorities in most of the countries where they operate, according to country case studies and feedback from national stakeholders. While all projects are relevant, questions may sometimes be asked whether the most relevant challenges are being properly prioritized. However, recipient governments are generally assertive about their requirements, particularly as they are often called upon to co-finance projects supported by global funds and endorse them at both the political and the technical level.

23. **UNDP plays an essential role in managing global funds at the national level, and is sometimes the only feasible or available international partner. It may implement directly due to a lack of national capacity arising from political or security reasons, governance issues or a lack of management and administrative expertise.** National

authorities usually welcome UNDP in global fund implementation, which often builds on long-standing historical relationships. Even governments with evident implementation capacity are seen to be making the pragmatic choice of keeping UNDP as a service provider. In the case of global funds, UNDP specialist knowledge on project design and grant application is a reason for choosing to work through UNDP. There have been a few cases where a government felt that it was able to take responsibility itself, which inevitably created some tensions with UNDP.

24. **National capacity development is highlighted in agreements between UNDP and global funds. While project-based capacity development activities are commonplace, UNDP does not prioritize a longer-term vision and systematized approach aimed at enabling national partners to be self-sufficient.** Even in the most challenging contexts, there is a sense among fund managers and within recipient governments that UNDP could do more to prepare for handover to national authorities. While UNDP has generated guidance on effective capacity development, in practice it is often not considered user-friendly or sufficiently comprehensive or adaptable to specific national circumstances. Moreover, there is no mandatory approach to capacity assessment, baseline-setting or exit strategies.

25. **There is a good fit between the objectives of the UNDP-global fund partnerships and current UNDP strategic objectives and international commitments. Challenges remain in cross-linkages with other strategic objectives at the project level. Alignment with the UNDP core mandate is a matter of ongoing debate.** At the level of current UNDP strategic objectives and international commitments, the partnerships with global funds fit well. Project objectives are aligned with country programme objectives and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework which, in turn, feeds into UNDP global objectives. A mixed picture emerges – and there are observable differences between funds – regarding the extent to which cross-linkages are made at the project level between global fund activities and other UNDP strategic objectives (such as poverty reduction and gender equality).

26. **In delivering global fund programmes, UNDP – as the custodian of the resident coordinator function – coordinates initiatives with other concerned development actors. While relations with such development actors have often been mutually beneficial, they have occasionally been competitive or one-sided.** United Nations coordination works well at the formal United Nations Development Assistance Framework level, but there is scope for closer cooperation. United Nations country team members expressed the concern that UNDP works on issues outside its area specialization for which it does not consult or involve specialized agencies. The issue of unfair competition from UNDP in relation to different global funds was frequently raised. Relations with civil society tend to be weak; UNDP is often criticized for being too close to governments. However, partnerships with global funds may help UNDP open up to non-governmental organizations and communities.

27. **According to the assessment systems of the global funds under review, UNDP work is considered effective. UNDP generally receives satisfactory to high scores demonstrating its ability to deliver well within the context of the partnerships.** Each of the funds under review has systems for measuring the performance of recipient organizations on a regular basis and rating them against each other. According to those external systems of measurement, UNDP work has been found to be effective. Beyond the rating systems, there is ample evidence – based, in particular, on comprehensive evaluations of GEF and GFATM over the past years – that work conducted by the global funds has contributed to the achievement of development results. There are, however, a few less positive outcomes (for example, there are rare cases of corruption infecting individual global fund programmes at the country level).

28. **Efficient support to global funds is provided through the three-tier structure of headquarters units, regional service centres and country offices. In certain instances, the performance of regional service centres in underpinning the work of country offices varies considerably.** There is reportedly cross-fertilization between the units responsible for each of the global funds. However, there is no overall coordination

function for UNDP work with the funds. From a headquarters perspective, it can be a challenge to ensure a harmonized approach to specific global funds across country offices without line management or at least technical authority over field staff, or to ensure that all country and regional offices have the necessary specialist expertise.

29. **The rigidity of UNDP procedures is both an asset and a concern for global funds and national governments. There is a high level of comfort that UNDP will manage donor resources as intended and in line with strict internal standards. However, procedures are often perceived as excessively bureaucratic and prone to delays.** Some staff at GEF and GFATM raised concerns about the rigidity of UNDP procedures. Responses at the field level are mixed. Among some stakeholders there is high praise for UNDP systems relative to the weak administrations in the countries where it operates. But there are also a number of complaints about slow procurement processes; cumbersome and inconsistent accounting, planning and reporting procedures; delayed disbursements; and the inappropriate application of UNDP rules.

30. **From the UNDP perspective, some inefficiencies at the day-to-day working level can be attributed to the global funds themselves. Such issues are part of the ongoing dialogue between organizations that seek to improve efficiency on all sides.** Various concerns about global fund inefficiencies have been raised at UNDP headquarters and at the country level. Issues related to GEF include: rules and regulations that are complex and restrictive, a project cycle that is too short for lasting outcomes, and co-financing requirements that put UNDP at a disadvantage compared with development banks that offer loans. With regard to GFATM, there is frustration at the high turnover of GFATM staff in Geneva and the lack of internal information-sharing; there are doubts about the qualifications of local fund agents; and there is criticism of what is seen as the trialling of new and inefficient procedures. No issues were raised about the Multilateral Fund; the system seems straightforward and well understood.

31. **The overall monitoring and evaluation systems for global funds are found to work well and are often seen as more advanced than general UNDP requirements. There are challenges in monitoring and evaluating for broader development results and in tracking human development-related indicators.** UNDP faces some challenges in integrating the monitoring and evaluation requirements of global funds with its own systems. The project results of global funds are not fully integrated into evaluation planning at the country and bureau levels, and many evaluations covering GEF, GFATM and Multilateral Fund projects are not included in evaluation plans. All funds have rigorous monitoring and verification processes that track results using a range of quality criteria. However, longer-term impacts are not necessarily tracked. Overall, the monitoring and evaluation systems of the global funds are more advanced than those used by UNDP, but UNDP has adapted well and has shown a willingness to improve and learn.

32. **While UNDP overheads are agreed upon in the context of partnership documents, the staff of global funds frequently do not consider the level of UNDP charges to be justified. The rationale for overhead charges is not communicated adequately, which has soured relations at times.** UNDP cost recovery has been an issue for global funds, and GEF and GFATM have questioned the level of overheads. The Multilateral Fund appears to have a more standardized cost structure, and is able to work out mutually agreeable budgets. Some global fund staff consider UNDP charges to be excessive – sometimes due to misinformation or a lack of appreciation of the risks involved. For the most part, governments see value for money in the fees charged by UNDP and take the pragmatic view that these are the necessary cost of outsourced services. UNDP considers that its cost structure, which is agreed upon in partnership documents, is reasonable.

33. **UNDP and global funds, in particular GEF and GFATM, have different views on financial transparency. This apparent incompatibility of accountability systems has led to some tension, although decision 2011/23 of the UNDP Executive Board seeks to resolve differences.** Global funds frequently criticize a perceived lack of UNDP

transparency and financial openness. While they perceive UNDP as taking an excessively legalistic approach, UNDP is adamant that it is a sovereign organization with its own governance structure and accountability and oversight systems, and that the demands placed on it are too invasive. One aspect that is evident at both global and national levels is that UNDP seems poor at communicating what it stands for and what it does, which leads to misunderstanding and distrust among stakeholders.

34. **Many factors beyond UNDP control adversely affect efficiency. In assessing UNDP performance working with global funds, the challenge of working in difficult contexts is, at times, not fully recognized.** There are many factors beyond UNDP control that hinder project implementation. Despite external challenges, the possibility of using a direct execution modality (rather than a national execution modality) has enabled UNDP to surmount problems. External stakeholders have acknowledged that UNDP works in difficult contexts where no other organizations are available (as principal recipient of last resort under GFATM, for example). However, judging by the criticisms, the depth of these challenges is not sufficiently understood by critics – nor are they sufficiently communicated by UNDP.

35. **The sustainability of initiatives supported by UNDP-global fund partnerships and the results of those initiatives have varied. Sustainability depends on the continued availability of funding and the motivation and capacity of national counterparts to carry initiatives forward.** There are both positive and less positive examples of the sustainability of initiatives and results. Sustainability of impact varies with the fund and project and the targets set in the first place. For example, the Multilateral Fund has finite conclusive impacts in terms of reduced damage to the ozone layer, whereas GEF projects are highly varied and have more indeterminate impacts. Capacity development is central to sustainability, but has not always been strong. Middle-income countries, with a relatively high initial level of capacity and resources, are more easily able to apply lessons learned and to scale up activities.

36. **The sustainability of UNDP sectoral programmes is sometimes at risk where country offices are heavily dependent on particular sources of funding for the continuation of their programmes. Alternative funding sources are often not actively sought or available at the country level.** Heavy dependence on particular sources of funding is a concern. This is particularly the case with GEF, which is often intrinsic to the delivery of country office energy and environment portfolios. Other global funds do not engender dependency in the same way. The Multilateral Fund has a specific purpose that can only be serviced through that one particular funding source and does not affect the range of UNDP environmental work, while the whole premise of the partnership with GFATM is on an as-needed basis. Reliance on global funds is not necessarily a problem, provided that offices are set up to cope with funding fluctuations.

37. **Partnership between UNDP and global funds is susceptible to a variety of factors. The sustainability of such partnerships is not a given in a dynamic global development context where the priorities of established players are evolving and new actors are emerging.** Sustainability of partnerships often depends on factors outside UNDP control. The funds have their own raison d'être and internal 'drivers'. It is assumed, for example, that as GEF opens up to more implementing organizations, the UNDP role will diminish, and the choice of UNDP as principal recipient of last resort under GFATM usually depends on local needs, capacities and viewpoints. The Multilateral Fund is a more predictable source than others, as no changes to its implementation arrangements are envisaged. Under all funds, much rests on relations with national authorities, which are increasingly having a say in which organizations they choose to work with.

Philanthropic foundations

38. **In general, initiatives supported through partnership between UNDP and philanthropic foundations fit well with national and regional priorities. On some occasions, the alignment of such initiatives with UNDP principles and programmatic objectives is somewhat tenuous.** UNDP partnership with philanthropic foundations has

focused on issues of relevance to programme country governments, philanthropic foundations, and UNDP. The two regional-level initiatives, as well as other projects supported through partnership with philanthropic foundations, address important human development concerns in the countries in question. However, a number of projects conducted in partnership with philanthropic foundations appear to have taken UNDP to the fringes of programmatic relevance, although relevance to programme countries and philanthropic foundations was never in doubt.

39. **Partnership between UNDP and philanthropic foundations has been of limited strategic importance to all parties involved. Partnerships have tended to be reactive and focused on individual national and regional development challenges.** UNDP engagement with various philanthropic foundations over the past decade has evolved in the context of country-specific circumstances, personal contacts and occasional outreach initiatives by both sides. The overall financial importance to either UNDP or the foundations has been relatively limited; many projects and substantive contributions to objective achievement have been small in scope. Over the past decade, sporadic high-level contacts have taken place between UNDP and the three concerned philanthropic foundations. However, work cultures and expectations have varied considerably; close institutionalized cooperation has gradually evolved into a more ad hoc approach to partnership.

40. **In most cases, it is difficult to associate partnership between UNDP and philanthropic foundations with demonstrable and positive developmental change. In several instances, it is possible to report on the achievement of some development results.** The multifunctional platform initiative in West Africa, supported by the Gates Foundation, stands out as having made an important difference in the life of many primary stakeholders, predominantly women. With respect to other partnerships between UNDP and philanthropic foundations, though project outputs have been delivered, it is premature in many cases – or not possible – to determine their contribution to developmental change.

41. **Working relationships with philanthropic foundations are generally good, contributing to the delivery of planned outputs. A range of issues related to administrative arrangements and country office capacity reduce overall efficiency.** Most partnerships between UNDP and philanthropic foundations experienced bureaucratic challenges, including delays in reporting, funds allocation, procurement, recruitment and processing by regional service centres. These were due to different factors related varyingly to UNDP, the respective philanthropic foundation or the government. However, such issues are not inevitable, and some projects are implemented with relatively few setbacks.

42. **Adapting to the planning, monitoring and evaluation requirements of the philanthropic foundations has posed some challenges to UNDP country offices. The raising of standards has generally been welcomed and has contributed to increased capacities on the part of UNDP.** The quality of planning documents prepared for partnership initiatives with philanthropic funds tends to be relatively high. Monitoring and reporting systems have been based on philanthropic foundation requirements. As a result, UNDP has occasionally had to adapt its own systems and adopt procedures recommended by the foundations. Systems of results-based disbursements on the part of the foundations, based on regular reporting, have enforced some degree of discipline.

43. **UNDP overhead charges are frequently contested by philanthropic foundations and national government counterparts. UNDP has been unable to effectively communicate the rationale for the charges, which gives rise to periodic disagreements among partners and potentially undermines new partnership opportunities.** Philanthropic foundations and government partners tend to agree with UNDP on overhead charges (based on standard UNDP procedures) during the planning phases of projects. However, the issue of overhead charges often resurfaces and has, in some cases, led to philanthropic foundations reconsidering partnering with UNDP. The issue of overhead

charges is not always contentious, however, and there are examples of philanthropic foundations acknowledging the benefits of working with UNDP despite the charges.

44. **UNDP partnerships with philanthropic foundations have tended to be exclusive affairs. There is no evidence of UNDP having facilitated partnership between another United Nations country team member and a philanthropic foundation. Rather, there are examples of competition among United Nations organizations for philanthropic foundation patronage.** Overall, there are few instances where an existing partnership between UNDP and a philanthropic foundation has involved, or could have involved, other United Nations partners. In the United Arab Emirates, the Office of the Resident Coordinator appears to have been regularly bypassed by other United Nations organizations exploring partnership opportunities with nationally-based philanthropic foundations, to the point where government authorities have complained about United Nations competition and lack of harmonization.

45. **While the UNDP Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy has a focal point function for philanthropic foundation partnership, it has not established strong relationships with the foundations. Moreover, its support to programme units in terms of lessons-learning, knowledge-sharing and facilitating contacts with philanthropic foundations has been weak.** The Bureau has allocated very limited resources to liaison with philanthropic foundations or the conduct of related policy research and analysis. Responsibility for managing specific partnerships rests primarily with regional bureaux, regional service centres or country offices. The Bureau tends not to follow up closely on implementation, and plays only a limited role in tracking progress or collating related monitoring and evaluation reports. Neither does it play an active role in identifying lessons, sharing information or advocating for partnerships with philanthropic foundations.

46. **Overall, there are few indications that the results achieved through partnerships with philanthropic foundations are sustainable. While efforts have been made to ensure sustainability as part of project planning documents, most initiatives are either unlikely to achieve sustainability or will require more time to determine whether they will do so.** In the context of the partnerships between UNDP and philanthropic foundations that have contributed to achieving development results, a number of initiatives do show some potential for sustainability. In other initiatives – those related to democratic governance and capacity development, for example – much will depend on continued commitment and opportunities to take initial achievements forward.

47. **Given the ad hoc nature of most partnerships between UNDP and philanthropic foundations, it is likely that instances of partnership in particular country contexts will not be sustained in the long term. However, opportunities for ad hoc partnerships in new country contexts remain; opportunities for broader strategic cooperation with philanthropic foundations may also be possible.** A number of partnerships with philanthropic foundations are likely to end in the near future. Though new partnership opportunities will probably emerge, representatives of philanthropic foundations were not completely positive about the desirability of broader strategic partnerships with UNDP. Opportunities for strategic partnerships are not necessarily remote, however, given the recommendations made by foundations with respect to preferred partnership modalities (and presuming UNDP interest, which is not apparent at the moment).

IV. Conclusions

Conclusion 1: Reforms of the international development architecture are likely to continue given the efforts of the donor community to strengthen the performance of existing multilateral arrangements embodied by the United Nations, including through more direct issue-specific support. In this context, the UNDP record in demonstrating its comparative advantage has been stronger with respect to partnership with global funds than with philanthropic foundations.

48. In many areas, and given its near-universal country presence, UNDP still has a competitive advantage; its long experience and established structure means that it remains an indispensable part of the system. However, the future of this advantage is not secure – new actors will emerge, grow and gain confidence and experience; donor preferences will evolve; and global funds and programmes addressing a wide range of 'niche' issues will proliferate.

49. The central question for UNDP is how to secure future funding in order to discharge its mandate, relating to both its programmatic coverage as well as its strategic role within the United Nations System, as ably as possible. The experience of partnership with global funds, in particular, appears to imply a greater focus on a narrow range of specialized issues and corresponding closer cooperation with a number of specialist agencies (United Nations and otherwise). This may imply give-and-take in terms of UNDP capacity to pursue a more broadly defined human development agenda.

Conclusion 2: In engaging with global funds and philanthropic foundations, UNDP has demonstrated flexibility in adjusting its programmatic focus and operational modalities. Partnership with global funds has led to a concentration on narrowly defined sectoral issues that are also addressed, to a varying extent, by other specialized United Nations funds and programmes. Partnership with philanthropic foundations has resulted in coverage of an eclectic range of development issues.

50. In working with non-core funding instruments within the context of the changing development cooperation architecture, UNDP appears to have been prepared to engage, where opportune, with issues that lie on the fringes of the programmatic focus areas defined in its strategic plan, 2008-2013. This has been more pronounced in the partnership with philanthropic foundations, which has typically been more ad hoc and context-specific. In working with global funds, UNDP has developed highly specialized technical capacities within the programmatic focus areas of the strategic plan that may not previously have been required of UNDP.

51. In making itself available as a qualified partner of global funds, UNDP has found itself both competing and cooperating more frequently with other specialized United Nations organizations. This has affected inter-agency relations and has raised broader questions of United Nations System coherence, efficiency and development effectiveness.

Conclusion 3: The programmatic objectives of partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations are generally aligned with the broadly framed UNDP strategic plan. UNDP has missed opportunities to maximize the benefits of partnership to consistently integrate a human development perspective and foster a more holistic development approach.

52. In working with global funds and philanthropic foundations, UNDP did not sufficiently ensure relevance to its core priorities by mainstreaming objectives related to human development, national capacity development or coordination within the United Nations system. Though implementation remains uneven, there is a growing awareness of the need for cross-linkages and connections between thematic areas such as poverty reduction, gender equality and environmental sustainability. Capacity development activities are extensive at the project level, but a strategic approach that prioritizes the long-term objective of 'helping recipient governments help themselves' is lacking.

53. All partners have specific mandates that determine the type of activities they finance and the nature of the benefits they seek. This inevitably limits the nature of the projects for which UNDP can seek funding from such funds. Country offices consistently struggle to secure the additional funds needed to achieve core UNDP human development objectives.

Conclusion 4: UNDP remains an important conduit for development funding. This is particularly clear in the case of partnership with global funds, where strategic,

corporate-level linkages are cultivated and maintained. Partnerships with philanthropic foundations have been more opportunistic, based on country and project-level requirements. Moreover, given the fundamentally different organizational structures, procedures and cultures of philanthropic foundations, UNDP may not always be the most appropriate partner.

54. UNDP is one of a few organizations able to handle the large amounts of funding channelled through the global funds. It is able to cover a range of sectors in the complex environments in which these funds often seek to operate, and has the capacity to do so in accordance with internationally agreed standards. UNDP has demonstrated its ability to perform effectively, to meet the rigorous standards set by funds, and to develop innovative approaches to development and administrative challenges. Global funds are highly relevant strategic partners for UNDP, both in budgetary and substantive terms. The relationship is of mutual importance but tense at times, as large and complex institutions strive to find ways of working together.

55. UNDP is less essential to philanthropic foundations; they often deal with smaller-scale projects and thus have a wider choice of implementing organizations. Relationships with philanthropic foundations have not progressed much beyond ad hoc project-based partnerships. Some UNDP advantages – its size, structure and capacity to manage large-scale funding – are a disadvantage for smaller donors, where these strengths can become encumbrances. Whether UNDP would be able to meet smaller donor requirements (and to do so in a manner that would be cost-effective for its own purposes) raises questions as to its suitability as a partner.

Conclusion 5: UNDP management of partnerships with global funds and philanthropic foundations has lacked strategic vision and overall coordination. UNDP could have done more to foster coordination among headquarters-based management units – and between them, the regional bureaux and other policy bureaux and units. Partnership with philanthropic foundations has been neglected, limiting relationships to project-specific initiatives, with minimal corporate-level guidance and follow-up.

56. UNDP institutional-level working relationships with global funds are well established, with regular senior-level exchanges. While the respective central coordination units manage relations with the funds, on the one hand, and the implementing programme units, on the other, there is no overarching management of those relationships in the broader context of UNDP partnership with non-core donors. As a result, little, if any, cross-cutting analysis has been conducted of the programmatic role of the partnerships in the context of the changing development architecture. Over the past decade, UNDP has made few concerted attempts to foster longer-term, strategic-level partnerships with philanthropic foundations. The resulting impression received by philanthropic foundations is that UNDP is not particularly interested in communicating on substantive issues or in exploring strategic alliances.

Conclusion 6: At the institutional level, UNDP faces challenges in meeting the expectations of current and potential global fund and foundation partners. In particular, if UNDP is to maintain and enhance these partnerships it will need to resolve issues relating to transparency, bureaucratic efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

57. The support frame for international assistance is shifting. There is a wider array of international and national partners for donors to choose from, and recipient governments are increasingly demanding – and have the capacities – to directly implement international projects. UNDP success in this increasingly competitive environment requires greater responsiveness to donor expectations and a continuing effort to streamline institutional procedures so that the value of using UNDP services is clear. Although UNDP management has made progress on transparency issues (with respect to the sharing of audit information with donor partners, for example), such changes are perceived by partners as being made slowly and reluctantly. Concerns have also been raised about

UNDP overhead cost structures. While UNDP overhead fees may be equivalent to or less than those of some other international institutions, funders need to be convinced of the additional value that UNDP brings as an intermediate entity between the funders and their beneficiaries.

V. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: In fostering and strengthening partnerships with global funds and philanthropic foundations, UNDP should focus strongly on supporting the prioritization of national development concerns. To the extent possible, over-reliance on any particular funding source should be avoided in order to retain flexibility.

58. In working with global funds and philanthropic foundations to support national development, UNDP needs to be sensitive to the risk of influencing national development agendas through the availability of funding in earmarked sectors. Though uncommon, there were instances where a side-effect of global fund involvement was to draw attention – and counterpart resources – away from the highest national concerns. In such circumstances, UNDP has a vital role as mediator, ensuring that the proposed package of activities meets national interests.

59. The integrity of UNDP programming in any given thematic area should be safeguarded by avoiding an over-reliance on one particular fund or foundation. Some sectoral programmes are heavily or wholly reliant on specific sources of funding. This makes the programmes vulnerable to closure if the funding stops. It can also focus attention away from areas that may be equally critical but for which funding may be less readily available. While some country offices may have few options, country offices should receive support to identify alternative sources of funding and diversify their funding base.

Recommendation 2: UNDP should engage more explicitly and consistently with global funds and philanthropic foundations in order to establish common ground and develop mutual approaches to development challenges. In its partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations, UNDP should place more explicit emphasis on the central importance of mainstreaming a human development perspective and developing national capacities.

60. UNDP needs to continually demonstrate to global funds and philanthropic foundations that it is a relevant partner. In addition to maintaining a country presence and the ability to deliver programmes and projects, relevance is a function of the value that UNDP adds in contributing international expertise, sharing lessons learned around the world, and building synergies with broader efforts. UNDP should make more concerted efforts to ensure that its partnership with philanthropic foundations falls within its programmatic mandate, adheres to human development principles, and represents value for money.

61. While UNDP has made substantial progress over the past years in advocating stronger linkages with a broader human development perspective and in securing the commitment of its partners to related objectives, it should explicitly require that partners foster cross-linkages that encourage advancing areas such as gender equality, capacity development, environmental sustainability and civil society participation. A more systematized approach to capacity development will be necessary to enable country offices to identify opportunities to better track progress and explain to other stakeholders what it is doing. Capacity development, with clear benchmarks that can be monitored and evaluated, should be a key deliverable in all global fund and philanthropic foundation projects.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should focus on the role that partnership with global funds can play in securing development support to programme countries, particularly in the context of the rapidly changing international development

cooperation architecture. UNDP needs stronger central coordination of information and knowledge management functions in order to facilitate a more strategic approach to partnership with global funds.

62. There is no overarching function that oversees all UNDP work with global funds, and there is limited coordination among the respective units – or between them and regional bureaux and other policy bureaux and units. Identifying or developing such a function would place UNDP senior management in a better position to engage with the global funds in a more strategic manner. Considering the importance of partnership to UNDP, particularly from the perspective of resource mobilization, a more integrated and less piecemeal approach is advisable, particularly during a period when donor relations are undergoing rapid change.

63. A central coordinating function is likely to be able to play a strategic role in engaging with other development actors (particularly United Nations organizations) in connection with the partnerships with global funds. There are internal fault lines within UNDP that constrain the exchange of lessons learned across the organization. UNDP should explore ways to strengthen the management of knowledge emanating from, and pertaining to, different partnerships across the organization.

Recommendation 4: Building on ongoing Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy initiatives, UNDP should develop a partnership strategy to engage with philanthropic foundations. Such a strategy should be built on a clear assessment of potential partners; on their motivations and goals; on potential benefits to UNDP programme countries; on UNDP value-added in engaging with such partners; and the opportunities and risks of doing so.

64. In order to make the most of potential opportunities for constructive engagement with philanthropic foundations, UNDP should undertake a thorough review of existing partnership experiences and potential partnership opportunities. UNDP would be negligent in its responsibilities to its Member States if it did not engage with such foundations in a proactive and sustained manner. UNDP could conceivably make an important contribution as a facilitator between philanthropic foundations and a range of partners in programme countries; moreover, depending upon the nature of partnerships forged in the future, the potential for supporting the mobilization of significant amounts of resources for development should not be discounted.

65. UNDP should explore different models of collaboration with philanthropic foundations – such as mobilizing the collective support of foundations for particular issues, and engaging in partnerships with foundations in collaboration with United Nations partners involved in similar areas. UNDP should strengthen its information management and reporting system for philanthropic foundations, with a view to improving its understanding of partnership trends with regard to such foundations.

Recommendation 5: UNDP has a particular responsibility to find solutions to operational and procedural bottlenecks, including issues relating to transparency and oversight, that hamper relationships with global funds and philanthropic foundations. In order to minimize discord stemming from differences in bureaucratic cultures and expectations, UNDP should develop a communication strategy that clarifies what it can and cannot do.

66. UNDP should conduct a comprehensive review of its rules, procedures and practices relating to partnerships with global funds and philanthropic foundations. The review should provide the basis for engaging in comprehensive, cross-cutting dialogues to strengthen partnerships and increase efficiencies. It should also lead to developing a partnership framework for global funds and philanthropic foundations, clearly defining programmatic objectives and the operational environment.

67. UNDP should continue to review and take forward its processes for financial transparency and auditing in relation to non-core funds, particularly large-scale global

funds. Full disclosure should be the norm, whether it refers to information at the country level or to principles upheld by the central organization. UNDP should consider conducting a comprehensive assessment of the financial cost of partnerships with different global funds and philanthropic foundations. The assessment should focus on strengthening the position of UNDP to negotiate overhead charges in the future and to demonstrate its level of counterpart funding. UNDP should engage with its partners in more innovative ways in order to ensure that its work supporting programme country development is better recognized and understood.

68. Monitoring and evaluation of projects implemented through partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations should receive adequate attention, as partnerships can only mature when there is mutual learning. UNDP should also apply lessons learned from the monitoring and evaluation of partnerships with global funds and philanthropic foundations to other areas of its work. An additional concern would be to ensure that monitoring and evaluation capture the contributions of the partnerships to achieving broad human development outcomes.

United Nations DP/2012/24

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services

Distr.: General
22 June 2012

Original: English

Second regular session 2012
4-10 September 2012, New York
Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Evaluation

Management response to the evaluation of UNDP partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations

I. Context and background

1. UNDP concurs with the assessment of the changing development cooperation landscape contained in the evaluation of UNDP partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations. It recognizes the increasing preference of donors to make additional funding available through non-core channels and through other partners, and agrees that the relationship with non-core donors is fundamentally different from the relationship with traditional donors.

2. UNDP is cognizant of the increasing importance of global funds, vertical funds and philanthropic foundations, and of the strategic importance of its partnership with them. The present evaluation provides valuable input that will inform ongoing efforts in that regard. Some of the recommendations are being addressed, and others require urgent action.

3. The evaluation of the philanthropic foundations is much narrower in scope than that of the global funds. Resource mobilization from foundations amounts to $10.1 million, or 1.5 per cent of non-core resources, whereas the combined contribution from global funds amounts to $420 million, or 16.2 per cent of non-core resources.

4. The global and vertical funds provide grant funding to recipient countries to help them achieve their national development priorities, which are aligned with the global objectives and priorities of the funds. The global and vertical fund units of UNDP, in turn, align the objectives of UNDP with those of the funds and channel grant funding to the recipient countries to support the delivery of results.

5. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the 'Global Fund') is an innovative public-private partnership that has played a crucial role in world efforts to respond successfully to the three diseases. In the 10 years since it was created, the Global

Fund has raised over $22.6 billion to co-finance large-scale prevention, treatment and care programmes in over 150 countries. Those investments have generated impressive results, contributing significantly to global progress towards Millennium Development Goal 6.

6. The UNDP partnership with the Global Fund reflects the specific role of UNDP in HIV and health, which focuses on social determinants, capacity development and support to multi-sectoral coordination and governance. In working with the Global Fund, UNDP relies on the World Health Organization to set norms and standards and to provide relevant technical support in public health, as well as on United Nations partners such as the United Nations Children's Fund and UNFPA.

7. The Global Fund achieves its goals through a broad range of partnerships, including with the United Nations family. The relationship of the Global Fund with UNDP is a crucial component of that partnership, with a focus on three interlinked objectives:

(a) Supporting implementation by serving as interim principal recipient for the Global Fund in countries facing exceptional development challenges or complex emergencies (in most other countries the principal recipients for the Global Fund are national entities such as ministries of health or national non-governmental organizations);

(b) Developing the capacity of national entities to take over the management of Global Fund programmes as soon as circumstances permit, or to improve their performance if they are already serving as principal recipients; and

(c) Strengthening the policy and programme quality of Global Fund-related work at country and global levels, in line with the UNDP role as a cosponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the core UNDP mandates in governance and capacity development.

8. The distinctive role of UNDP was recognized in a report issued in September 2011 by a high-level panel appointed by the Global Fund board to review UNDP fiduciary controls and oversight mechanisms.

9. UNDP is nominated as interim principal recipient in many countries because of the added value it brings to the role, including its broader capacity development work. The role is an interim arrangement that lasts until one or several national entities (government entities and/or non-governmental organizations) can take over grant implementation. As of 1 March 2012, UNDP serves as interim principal recipient in 29 countries or territories, with 65 active grants (2- to 5-year duration) totalling approximately $1.39 billion, and manages 12 per cent of Global Fund grant volume for all active signed grants.

10. Despite the difficult circumstances in countries where UNDP serves as principal recipient, the grants it implements have achieved better performance than the overall portfolio of Global Fund grants, which includes countries where circumstances are relatively less risky. In countries where UNDP has been serving as principal recipient, 47 million people have been reached by preventive services; over 490,000 cases of tuberculosis have been detected and treated; 32 million cases of malaria have been treated; and 774,000 people have been initiated on life-saving antiretroviral therapy[1].

11. While supporting countries in implementing grants and ensuring the timely delivery of services, UNDP also helps develop the capacity of national entities to take over as principal recipient. This work focuses on programme management; financial management

[1] Data as of end 2010. Current anti-retroviral data as of end 2011.

and systems; monitoring and evaluation; and procurement and supply-chain management, with the overarching goal of promoting longer-term national ownership and sustainability. The role of UNDP extends beyond countries where it serves as interim principal recipient: in another nine countries UNDP has helped strengthen the capacity of prospective and current national principal recipients to manage and implement Global Fund-financed programmes. UNDP has handed over the role of principal recipient to national entities in 14 countries. It is in the process of doing so in another nine countries for at least one grant. Its increasing investment in enshrining capacity development and systems strengthening within Global Fund grants where it is interim principal recipient is already facilitating the longer-term sustainability of programmes by national entities.

12. To cite just one example, in December 2011, UNDP Liberia officially handed over the principal recipient function of the Global Fund to the Ministry of Health after a successful seven-year partnership during which UNDP delivered grants valued at $71 million for the Liberian Government and the Global Fund. In 2004 UNDP was requested by the Global Fund to serve as interim principal recipient as Liberia was emerging from civil war and struggling with a large-scale humanitarian crisis. In 2007, UNDP embarked on a partnership with the Ministry of Health to build national capacity while continuing to support implementation of the grants. Following a successful assessment by the Global Fund, the Ministry of Health took over the principal recipient function for the HIV grant in January 2010, followed by the malaria and tuberculosis grants in December 2011. UNDP implemented an intensive capacity-building plan to equip the Ministry with the systems, tools, guidelines, and logistical and operational tools to facilitate the efficient management, oversight and coordination of Global Fund projects, emphasizing financial management, monitoring and evaluation systems and capacities, and procurement and supply-chain management systems and facilities. To support government efforts to rebuild the destroyed health infrastructure, the National Reference Laboratory of Liberia was fully equipped; the first drug sensitivity and testing laboratory in the country was created; five blood banks were set up and 11 drug depots serving all 15 counties were established. The capacity of national civil society organizations was also strengthened as they were key partners in reaching communities with life-saving services. Furthermore, UNDP supported the Ministry of Health in strengthening its human resources. Ministry staff were recruited and benefited from both formal and on-the-job training. In addition to strengthening expertise at the central level, UNDP supported the Ministry in training 175,222 health care providers in case management; laboratory techniques; monitoring and evaluation; data recording and reporting; community-based interventions; and information, education and behaviour change communication strategies. The Ministry of Health and its key civil society partners are now in a position to fully implement the Global Fund grants, ensuring that health results achieved with support from the Global Fund are sustained and Liberia can continue scaling up life-saving programmes in the years to come.

13. The UNDP Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Multilateral Fund units provide services to eligible countries and to the vertical funds. For example, UNDP supports countries in aligning national development priorities with the global environmental benefits sought by the GEF and with the UNDP priorities outlined in its strategic plan, 2008-2013. UNDP works with countries to formulate integrated environment and energy programming frameworks and subsequent projects (requiring highly specialized technical expertise), accessing GEF grant financing, combining it with the necessary co-financing, and providing oversight and supervision support during project implementation. GEF grant financing that is channelled through UNDP cannot be 'reprogrammed' by UNDP. Vertical funds grant financing must be combined with co-financing, which is typically secured from governments, the private sector, other vertical funds, and other organizations, including core resources from UNDP. In the case of GEF, the ratio of grant financing to co-financing

is typically 1:4. The total grant funding available for countries to access over a four-year GEF phase is decided by the GEF Council at the beginning of each phase, and is publicly available information. For the Multilateral Fund, funding is allocated on the basis of the level of production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances in a country, and is strictly linked to the implementation of activities furthering compliance with the Montreal Protocol. As with GEF, grant allocation to countries is decided by the Multilateral Fund Executive Committee.

14. UNDP is pleased that the evaluation recognizes GEF and the Multilateral Fund as 'vertical funds' designed to channel grant funding through UNDP and other United Nations organizations, as well as the World Bank. The vertical funds are structured so that recipient governments can choose to work with UNDP or another organization to access grant financing. In the case of the GEF, UNDP or one of nine other implementing agencies may be selected by countries to assist them in accessing grant funds. In the case of the Multilateral Fund, countries may select among four implementing agencies, including UNDP, to support their activities. This provides countries with considerable leveraging power to pick and choose among agencies depending on the comparative advantages of each. This requires the UNDP GEF and Multilateral Fund units to be innovative, adaptable and highly technically skilled so as to remain relevant to countries.

15. The evaluation recognizes that many global and vertical fund programmes and projects are implemented in difficult contexts – for example, in situations of political instability, insecurity and conflict, and weak national capacity. In the case of the vertical funds, such as the Multilateral Fund and GEF, direct execution of national projects is rarely used, despite those difficult contexts. Direct execution is used primarily for global projects. National ownership and national execution are the preferred option.

II. Achievements, challenges and the way forward

16. The evaluation strongly supports the extensive involvement of UNDP in global and vertical funds because through these partnerships UNDP has contributed tangibly to the achievement of results. The evaluation attributes this success to a number of factors, including: the comparative advantage of UNDP with global and vertical funds; management systems; the calibre of its staff; and efficient support from the three-tier structure provided through country offices, regional service centres and headquarters. The evaluation notes some isolated cases of inefficiencies in the partnership with global and vertical funds, which UNDP has addressed.

17. The evaluation recognizes the strategic importance that partnership with global and vertical funds brings to UNDP, both in mobilizing significant volumes of non-core financing and in providing UNDP with opportunities to participate in global policy dialogue, innovative initiatives, and strengthening its own capacity. The evaluation notes that the monitoring and evaluation systems for global and vertical funds are found to work well, and are often seen as more advanced than general UNDP requirements. Global and vertical fund project monitoring and evaluation systems are applied by UNDP staff and could be replicated and adapted to other UNDP projects and programmes (recommendation 5 of the evaluation).

18. UNDP is pleased that the evaluation recognizes that working with global and vertical funds has facilitated better integration of programmes within UNDP. Indeed, most GEF and Multilateral Fund-financed projects and programmes supported by UNDP are designed to achieve multiple development benefits. For example, a GEF-financed project designed to deliver a global environmental benefit – addressing the root causes of the environmental degradation of Lake Tanganyika – introduced alternative income activities for women in

Zambia bordering Lake Tanganyika which improved their livelihoods, provided sustainable income opportunities, and reduced one of the threats to the environmental sustainability of Lake Tanganyika. A Multilateral Fund-financed project in Lebanon designed to eliminate the use of methyl bromide (a toxic, ozone-depleting chemical) protected human health and provided crop-growers with access to new technologies and training, while livelihoods were improved by the resulting increase in productivity.

19. As principal recipient for Global Fund grants, UNDP has advocated for greater support in the area of capacity development for the programmatic and operational aspects of implementation by national entities. In addition, UNDP engages with the Global Fund and its country partners on substantive policy and programmatic issues, in line with the UNDP role as a co-sponsor of UNAIDS and its core mandates in governance and capacity development. This includes promoting the inclusion of human rights and gender equality initiatives into Global Fund grants, and ensuring that financing reaches key populations (such as men who have sex with men, and local networks of people living with HIV). UNDP also helps to align grants with national development plans and poverty reduction strategies; promotes appropriate public sector reform and anti-corruption initiatives; and fosters principles of national ownership, aid effectiveness and sustainability.

20. In Belarus, as principal recipient of Global Fund grants since 2004, UNDP has promoted a human rights-based approach to preventing HIV infection among injecting drug users in the country. In an important breakthrough, methadone substitution treatment was introduced through the Global Fund grants. A pilot project was launched in Gomel in 2007, targeting users for whom other treatment methods had failed. In 2009 a second methadone site was opened in Minsk, and a legal framework for the provision of methadone substitution treatment was drafted, with UNDP support. With UNDP as the main advocate for expanding the programme, more than 700 patients were receiving treatment at 12 methadone points by the end of 2011. In Haiti, as Global Fund principal recipient UNDP has adopted a holistic approach, building linkages between its work on poverty and early recovery and its work on HIV, health, human rights, and gender equality. It has helped mainstream HIV and health-related initiatives into different phases of early recovery to ensure that people living with HIV – and other vulnerable groups, including sex workers, men who have sex with men, and youth – are able to access life-saving HIV services. Through UNDP-managed grants, 32,000 people are receiving anti-retroviral therapy services, and HIV is mainstreamed into cash-for-work and gender-based violence programmes.

21. The evaluation found that global and vertical fund projects fit well with national priorities, and that UNDP has a crucial role as mediator, ensuring that country needs are matched with available funding. UNDP is pleased that the evaluation notes that no evidence was found to support the perception that global and vertical funds were 'imposed' on countries, or that UNDP had 'pressured' governments into such projects. The evaluation recognizes that project-based capacity development activities are commonplace. The vertical and global funds prioritize capacity development and have developed monitoring and reporting tools to measure progress.

22. UNDP recognizes the challenges of extrapolating evaluation results when sample size is small compared to country coverage in the large portfolio of vertical funds. We believe that in many countries there is a wide range of examples not covered by this evaluation that better demonstrate multiple development benefits.

23. UNDP welcomes the assessment that partnership with UNDP is of strategic importance to global and vertical funds, as there is a shared commitment to international

standards; and that UNDP adds significant value to the delivery of global and vertical fund initiatives. UNDP does not fully agree with the analysis that its administrative capacity and global network, as opposed to its specialization in particular subject areas, are the main reasons for its being selected as a partner by the global and vertical funds. As indicated in the above paragraphs, UNDP is nominated interim primary recipient in many countries because of the added value it brings, including its broad capacity development experience. The evaluation acknowledges the increasing role and work of UNDP in capacity development and other substantive and policy domains. UNDP is also an essential partner in the Global Fund risk management framework for implementing grants in difficult contexts. In recent years, UNDP expertise in HIV/AIDS, health, and development, has been more effectively integrated into that role, and this is recognized by Global Fund stakeholders. Likewise, countries select UNDP as the GEF or Multilateral Fund implementing agency primarily because of its technical knowledge and experience in delivering multiple development benefits, and in aligning national development goals with global environment priorities, rather than because of its administrative capacity. In order to remain relevant to country partners, UNDP must continue to build its capacities to provide highly specialized technical services that are recognized and sought after by partner countries – for example, in unleashing the economic potential of protected areas; in catalysing climate finance, in renewable energy and chemicals management; and, more broadly, in 'green', low-emission, climate-resilient development strategies.

24. As noted in the evaluation, GEF is likely to open up to other national agencies, which will be accredited to access GEF grant financing for countries. The evaluation concludes that the role of UNDP will therefore diminish. UNDP does not support that assumption. Its role will certainly change in countries with national GEF agencies, and it will need to adapt and provide innovative services to governments and national agencies in those countries. Direct access is a sign of success – it demonstrates national ownership and strong capacity at the national level, which UNDP fully supports.

25. In partnership with the Global Fund, UNDP is managing approximately 12 per cent of Global Fund grant resources. As UNDP builds capacity and ensures the successful transition of the principal recipient role to more national entities, there will be an increasing demand for its capacity-building and systems-strengthening services for national principal recipients. In addition to working in countries where it has itself served as principal recipient, UNDP has helped strengthen the capacity of current and prospective national principal recipients in nine countries to manage and implement Global Fund-financed programmes. In Indonesia, the Government and UNDP partnered to strengthen the capacity of national principal recipients to improve the implementation of Global Fund programmes. After a 2007 assessment found weaknesses in programme management that prompted new restrictions, the Ministry of Health and UNDP developed a project to provide capacity-building support to principal recipients to meet performance targets. These included training for managerial and financial staff and national certifications in the areas of procurement, human resources management, and behavioural analysis. Within two years, the grants were rated as 'high-performing'.

26. The evaluation stresses that UNDP has a particular responsibility to find solutions to operational and procedural bottlenecks that affect relations with global and vertical funds. UNDP supports this conclusion. The UNDP global and vertical fund units are located within relevant UNDP thematic policy units so as to promote cross-linkages and synergies in thematic programming. However, UNDP global and vertical funds face an increasing number of similar operational issues linked to their common implementation service model, including environmental and social safeguards; fiduciary management; direct access; downward pressure on implementing fees; and difficulty in attracting, training and

retaining highly specialized technical staff. Greater operational coordination between UNDP global and vertical fund units could lead to efficiencies and the harmonization of various operational systems.

27. There has been wide formal engagement from UNDP senior management from various headquarters-based units and regional bureaus in the partnership with the Global Fund. The organizational performance group (led by the Associate Administrator) reviews the UNDP-Global Fund partnership on a six-monthly basis, based on a portfolio implementation and risk management review prepared by the Bureau for Development Policy/HIV together with the regional bureaus, the Procurement Support Office in the Bureau of Management, the Office of Audit and Investigations and the Legal Support Office. Preparations for this review include a detailed update of the portfolio, which is closely examined by the regional bureaus with follow-up consultations prior to the organizational performance group meeting. Thus all relevant parts of the organization come together to agree on specific, strategic directions for the partnership, including follow-up actions to be taken by all concerned. This has facilitated strong linkages between the work of the Global Fund work and that of UNDP on the broader human development agenda, as illustrated in the report. Given the success of this business model in monitoring and driving Global Fund country implementation and UNDP strategic priorities, it is suggested that the organizational performance group could be the central coordinating body for GEF and the Multilateral Fund as well, and that the group could complete the reviews sequentially. This would ensure and facilitate the systematic exchange of information and lessons learned across all the global funds managed by UNDP. It would also ensure greater support for diversification of funding (recommendation 1 of the evaluation report), and synergies in policy and programmatic work (recommendation 2) across the UNDP portfolio.

28. UNDP fully supports the recommendation for better policy and programming coordination between existing global and vertical funds, regional bureaus and other policy bureaus, and has taken steps towards that end (noted below). Additional layers of coordination are not likely to provide additional strategic value. UNDP will introduce regular coordination mechanisms between the global and vertical fund units and the UNDP organizational performance group (see key action 32). This is also consistent with the objectives of the Agenda for Change.

29. At the global level, UNDP provides substantive input to Global Fund policy documents as a member of the UNAIDS delegation to the Global Fund Board. UNDP supports the strategic and policy directions of Global Fund implementation in at least three areas:

(a) *Development of policy and programme plans.* UNDP supported the Global Fund in the development of its gender equality strategy (November 2008) and its sexual orientation/gender identities strategy (May 2009), which outline strategic directions for ensuring gender-equitable responses to AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. UNDP also supported the development of plans of action for both strategies, and was part of the external advisory group that led the two-year evaluation of the strategies.

(b) *Support to global fund governance structures.* UNDP supports the preparation of all technical briefing notes and presentations for Technical Review Panel members on human rights, gender and sexual orientation/gender identities issues that precede the review of all funding applications. In addition, UNDP supports the Global Fund secretariat in implementing the gender equality and sexual orientation/gender identities plans of action, in building capacity for country coordination mechanisms, and in identifying innovative ways to 'make the money work' through the

development and effective implementation of human rights-based programmes that best serve the needs of communities.

(c) *Research for advocacy and policy change and strategy development.* In 2009, in collaboration with the UNAIDS secretariat and the Global Fund, UNDP initiated a study to analyse the implementation of projects within the analytical framework of key programmes addressing HIV-related human rights in active Global Fund HIV grants for rounds 6 and 7. This 2010 study analysed all Global Fund-approved round 6 and 7 HIV proposals as well as the corresponding grant agreements, performance reports, work plans, and financial reports for data on programmes. Using the findings from the study, UNDP worked with other partners, including the Open Society Institute and the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, to advocate for policy and process changes with the Global Fund secretariat and Global Fund board including incorporating the changes in the development of the Global Fund strategy, 2012-2016. UNDP supported the Global Fund in developing its new strategy.

30. In November 2012, the Global Fund board approved its strategy framework, 2012-2016, with the promotion and protection of human rights as one of its five key objectives. UNDP is supporting the Global Fund board and secretariat in developing an implementation plan for the strategy that will greatly enhance the ability of the Fund, as a leader in the sphere of global public health, to advocate with countries for the primacy of human rights in delivering tangible HIV, health and development results.

31. As with the Global Fund, UNDP maintains a strategic partnership with the GEF secretariat. A provision was included in the GEF-5 climate change focal area strategy to support synergies between the GEF and carbon finance (the Kyoto Protocol finance systems of the Clean Development Mechanism targeting the compliance market; and voluntary carbon market instruments). A tentative financial allocation of $20 million was set aside for this purpose, but the scope of work was left very generic and undefined. As part of the GEF secretariat effort to fill in the details of a carbon finance strategy detailing synergies and interactions between GEF and the new carbon finance mechanisms, it was decided to call upon GEF agencies to share their experiences and make suggestions. A UNDP technical team participated in a special carbon finance strategy meeting. The outcome was a GEF carbon finance strategy paper that was prepared by the secretariat for the approval of the Chief Executive Officer. Since then, GEF has approved a number of projects covering carbon finance.

III. Actions, taken and ongoing

32. The evaluation suggests that project-level cross-linkages remain mixed, and some opportunities for an integrated approach to sustainable development may be missed. It notes that development projects typically do not take environmental considerations into account. The environmental and social safeguard screening procedure adopted by UNDP in late 2011 should help address some of these concerns, as it supports the identification of such cross-linkages early in the project design phase. As the new procedure is incorporated into the UNDP programme and operations policies and procedures, UNDP must ensure that it becomes the centrepiece for a streamlined UNDP policy framework rather than an additional programming burden.

33. The evaluation notes that some inefficiencies at the day-to-day working level can be attributed to the global and vertical funds themselves. Indeed, UNDP has a clear role as a GEF implementing agency to work continuously with GEF to help it improve its operational and policy structures. This is a work in progress to which UNDP contributes

institutional and project-cycle management support on an ongoing basis. There is, however, increasing pressure to reduce the fee that UNDP and other implementing agencies receive for providing such support. Should fees be reduced, UNDP may be forced to curtail support to GEF, or to provide it on an ad-hoc cost-recovery basis.

34. The UNDP Evaluation Office has finalized guidance on project terminal evaluations that aligns with the requirements of global and vertical funds, notably GEF. The guidance specifies that country offices are responsible for uploading country-level project terminal evaluations and management responses into the UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre and for providing regular updates on the management responses. Regional service centres or central bureaus will be responsible for uploading global and regional projects. This will address the concern noted in the evaluation that global and vertical fund project evaluations are not routinely uploaded to the Evaluation Resource Centre.

35. As noted in the evaluation, the UNDP Executive Board decided in June 2011 to share audit reports with some global and vertical funds. These include the Global Fund and GEF, and will likely include the Adaptation Fund. This has been well received by the funds.

IV. Outstanding issues

36. This evaluation report was written with a nuanced understanding of the UNDP partnership with global funds. Furthermore, the report includes a detailed grasp and recognition of global fund issues, and we welcome its findings, conclusions and recommendations. While we fully endorse the majority of the conclusions and recommendations, there follow some specific comments on a select number of them.

37. On conclusion 1, increasing investment by UNDP in enshrining capacity development and overall systems strengthening within Global Fund grants where UNDP is interim principal recipient is already serving to facilitate the longer-term sustainability of programmes by national entities. In April 2012, the HIV/AIDS and capacity development groups in the Bureau for Development Policy launched a capacity development toolkit to strengthen national entities to implement national disease responses for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, to be distributed to countries by the end of 2012

38. Conclusion 3 states: "The programmatic objectives of partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations are generally aligned with the broadly framed UNDP strategic plan. UNDP has missed opportunities to maximize the benefits of partnership to consistently integrate a human development perspective and foster a more holistic development approach". Global Fund monies are indeed earmarked for specific disease interventions. However, within that funding envelope UNDP has been able to advocate for greater capacity development support for the programmatic and operational aspects of implementation by national entities. UNDP also engages with the Global Fund and its country partners on substantive policy and programmatic issues, in line with its core mandates in governance and capacity development and its role of co-sponsor of UNAIDS. UNDP promotes the inclusion of human rights and gender equality initiatives into Global Fund grants and ensures that financing reaches key populations. UNDP also helps to align grants with national development plans and poverty reduction strategies; promotes appropriate public sector reform and anti-corruption initiatives; and fosters principles of national ownership, aid effectiveness and sustainability.

39. Conclusion 6 states: "At an institutional level, UNDP has often been inflexible in terms of meeting the expectations of global funds and philanthropic foundations on

transparency, bureaucratic efficiency and cost-effectiveness. This has limited the ability of UNDP to fully exploit partnership and funding opportunities with such funds and foundations". The report mentions "resistance within UNDP over becoming more transparent and accountable, particularly through the audit system", and adds, "there needs to be a realization that relationships with non-core donors are fundamentally different. UNDP, like other United Nations organizations, cannot rely on old protections and ways of working which were agreed in the context of core funding from Member States many decades ago. Nor can it expect, along with other United Nations organizations, and nor is it likely to receive, exemptions from non-core donors, on the grounds of its special status as a United Nations body".

40. It is important to note that it was Member States themselves that restricted UNDP ability to show more transparency. Within the limits they established, UNDP has shown the utmost flexibility and creativity to demonstrate its commitment to transparency – as evidenced through the Global Fund partnership, especially in the realm of audit and investigations. In particular, the focused efforts of the Administrator in advancing the access to audit issue with the UNDP Executive Board should be highlighted. Moreover, while the question of whether or not to publicly disclose internal audit reports may be viewed as a transparency issue, it is definitely not an accountability issue. The text as it stands could therefore be misleading.

41. While we agree with the spirit of conclusion 6 that UNDP needs to be more flexible in order to adapt to, and work more efficiently with, these new partners, there is concern about the statement that UNDP should not receive "protection" or "exemptions" on the grounds of being a United Nations body. UNDP will remain a United Nations body, governed by the General Assembly and the Executive Board, and UNDP cannot realistically depart from that fundamental legal status when working with non-Member State donors. Specifically, UNDP cannot and should not give up the privileges and immunities of its staff. Nor should UNDP make exceptions to its 'single audit principle'. That principle is enshrined in its legal framework as a United Nations organization and is deemed a necessary arrangement. It is not possible to allow donors to exercise their own sovereignty over UNDP to access underlying audit documents for oversight purposes. This would create complete chaos and would undermine the value-for-money of UNDP having its own internal and external audit functions.

42. Conclusion 6 is also problematic in the context of the UNDP partnership with the Global Fund. After several years of negotiating a compromise with the Global Fund board and secretariat that respects the 'single audit principle', the investigative authority of the Office of Audit and Investigation, and the privileges and immunities of UNDP and its staff while giving the Global Fund access to audit reports on the same terms as Member States, UNDP now has a memorandum of understanding with the Global Fund on investigation cooperation and access to documents. The wording of conclusion 6 could risk undermining all the progress and good-faith efforts of both parties. In fact, the special partnership that the Global Fund has with UNDP was commended by the independent High-level Panel appointed by the Global Fund board and was tasked in 2011 to review the financial management and fiduciary oversight of the Global Fund. The High-level Panel report, September 2011, states that when the Global Fund uses UNDP as an implementing partner it relies on the sound procedures and rules of UNDP.

43. Below are some additional comments concerning the content of the report. Regarding section 3.1, on the evolving role of UNDP within the United Nations system, it should be

noted that HIV/AIDS has been a designated, stand-alone UNDP practice area for the past 10 years and is linked to specific outcomes in its strategic plan, 2008-2013.

44. Regarding section 4.1.1, on relevance and alignment with programmatic priorities, it should be noted that in some instances national entities do have the capacities to implement grants but that the countries are donor-constrained. This leads to difficult situations and tensions, where governments feel that they are able to be principal recipients but the Global Fund and its donors disallow this.

45. Regarding section 4.1.3, on efficiency, it should be emphasized that in addition to UNDP Executive Board decision 2011/23, on Global Fund access to UNDP internal audit reports, UNDP has established a secure electronic portal to allow designated Global Fund staff to review its audit reports from Geneva.

46. Regarding section 4.1.4, on sustainability, it is important to note the changing policy directives issued by the Global Fund Board in the last year on the financing of middle-income countries – making issues of sustainability even more critical for those countries.

V. UNDP and philanthropic foundations

47. In formulating the conclusions, the report does not include sufficient analysis of the evolving role of foundations in international development beyond giving volumes of financing. UNDP finds the linkages between the rationale and the conclusions weak when referring to criteria such as the relevance (positioning) and sustainability of relations between UNDP and foundations. UNDP believes that the positioning of the organization and the sustainability of future relationships should factor into the new roles and capacities of foundations in international development. These roles include foundations as a source of development knowledge; innovations; high-level advocacy on international development issues; influence on international development policy; and venture philanthropy.

48. UNDP does not agree with the conclusion 5, which states that "partnership with philanthropic foundations has been neglected, limiting relationships to project-specific initiatives, with minimal institutional-level guidance and follow-up". Relationships between UNDP and foundations were driven in the past by a combination of internal demand and external partnering opportunities. Considering the structure of UNDP as a large multilateral organization, project-based collaboration with relevant country-level, regional centre or headquarters support – based on the type of support needed – was the most efficient model. Today, the UNDP business model, as well as the way philanthropic foundations operate, has shifted. The rationale behind the recent institutional decision to invest in a comprehensive UNDP strategy for engagement with philanthropic foundations is provided below.

49. Philanthropic foundation contributions to international development have increased significantly over the past decade, much of the change taking place in the last five years. In addition to committing much larger amounts of money, foundations have fundamentally changed the ways they operate and the roles they play in international development.

50. In the past, funding from foundations for international development constituted a very small part of foreign aid, typically to strengthen civil society in countries. The landscape was populated mostly by United States-based foundations, which gave grants for small-scale and single-issue projects in an isolated fashion, typically with little or no coordination with national governments. There were very few globally significant foundations interested in engaging with multilaterals in a strategic manner to find common

approaches to development problems. Because of the relative insignificance of the impact of foundations on international development, the concerns regarding their poor transparency and their accountability only to small, private boards did not really surface.

51. Against that background, UNDP invested in project-based relationships with foundations. Given the different organizational structures and cultures of UNDP and foundations, as well as the relatively small scale of interventions, collaboration for resource mobilization implied relatively high transaction costs for UNDP. It was therefore rare, although strategically important. Projects and relations were managed mostly by country offices. In addition, the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy, on a case-by-case basis, coordinated multidimensional relationships with the few large players interested in linkages with multilaterals. The experience revealed the comparative advantages between foundations and UNDP, mutual goals, and possible models for working together. It also created opportunities for elevating collaboration from project-based and country-level to institutional and strategic collaboration, with headquarters coordination, as was the case with the Gates Foundation.

52. UNDP experience and growing internal demand for strategic relationships is aligned with changes in the landscape of philanthropy. "The 'new philanthropy' is global, and is increasingly seen as a significant element in international development. It is attributed to a growing number of new players, some from the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa group (known as 'BRICs') and from emerging countries where individual wealth is expanding. There is an emergence of a 'new breed' of investment-minded philanthropists who use philanthropic endeavours to support enterprise solutions and who experiment with innovative business models for poverty reduction.

53. The volume of institutionalized philanthropic contributions for international aid projects has increased steadily in recent years; they are now estimated to be between $4 billion and $6 billion annually. That increase in volume, as well as philanthropic investments leveraging large-scale, enterprise-based projects in socially sensitive fields such as education and health, has brought to the fore concerns about how foundations measure up in terms of transparency and accountability.

54. Foundations see themselves as fully fledged development partners rather than donors, and expect close involvement in activities such as policy discussions, advocacy and problem analysis. They have become a source of valuable development knowledge. They run highly visible campaigns in the media and influence international development policy. As noted, there has been a growing trend towards quality management and public accountability. Those are the three main shifts that UNDP considers as an opportunity to engage.

55. Consequently, UNDP is already acting on recommendation 4, on developing a UNDP institutional strategy for engagement with philanthropic foundations. The strategy aims to reposition the organization vis-à-vis the new developments in the philanthropic sector and to embrace the new opportunities. It focuses on strategic collaboration for finding common ground and solutions to development, with an emphasis on mainstreaming sustainable human development. The strategy acknowledges the wide range of cash and non-cash resources and assets that foundations offer, and recognizes the new value proposition of foundations in international development.

Annex

Key recommendations and management response

Note: The definitions of abbreviations and acronyms used in this table will be found at the end of the document.

Evaluation recommendation 1. In fostering and strengthening the partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations, UNDP should focus strongly on supporting the prioritization of national development priorities. To the extent possible, and to retain some flexibility, an over-reliance on any particular funding source should be avoided.

Management response

The evaluation found that global and vertical fund projects fit well with national priorities, and that UNDP has an important role as mediator, ensuring that country needs are matched with available funding. UNDP is pleased that the evaluation notes that no evidence was found to support the perception that global and vertical funds were 'imposed' on countries or that UNDP 'pressured' governments are into such projects. UNDP has identified three key elements to support country offices: programming, diversifying the funding base, and identifying alternative funding sources.

UNDP shares the concern of over-reliance on one fund (the Global Fund) to address national priorities such as the response to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. In that vein, the UNDP-Global Fund partnership team is prioritizing increased work on the sustainable financing of national responses, particularly to HIV and AIDS, and will work, where possible, as a convenor to facilitate increases in domestic and international financing in countries where UNDP is the IPR.

Key actions	Time frame	Responsible units	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Support country offices in formulating integrated environment and energy country programming frameworks.	Ongoing	UNDP-GEF; UNDP Montreal Protocol Unit (MLF)		
1.2 Assist countries in programme implementation, provide support in accessing, combining and sequencing financing.	Ongoing	UNDP-GEF; UNDP Montreal Protocol Unit (MLF)		
1.3 Continue the environment community of practice networks at the regional and global levels.	Ongoing	EEG; UNDP-GEF; GEF SGP; UNDP Montreal Protocol Unit (MLF); BDP		
1.4 Support country offices in aligning Global Fund grants with national development plans and poverty reduction strategies, promote appropriate public sector reform and anti-corruption initiatives, and foster principles of national ownership, aid effectiveness and sustainability.	Ongoing	Global Fund		

Evaluation recommendation 2. UNDP should engage more explicitly and consistently with global funds and philanthropic foundations, to establish common ground and develop mutual approaches to development challenges. In its partnership with global funds and philanthropic foundations, UNDP should place more explicit emphasis on the central importance of mainstreaming a human development perspective and developing national capacity.

Management response

The evaluation recognizes that project-based capacity development activities are commonplace. The global and vertical funds prioritize capacity development and have developed monitoring and reporting tools to measure progress. Within the constraints imposed by the independent mandate of each global fund, UNDP will promote cross-linkages between environmental sustainability, gender equality, capacity development, and civil society participation.

The expanded role of UNDP in ensuring greater policy and programmatic input in Global Fund policy circles, including as part of the UNAIDS delegation to the Global Fund board, demonstrates the added value of UNDP as a partner beyond the implementation of the grants. UNDP supported the Global Fund board and secretariat in developing the Global Fund strategy, 2012-2016, and has become a trusted partner to the Global Fund in addressing development challenges linked to the three epidemics. This work will continue: cross-cluster and cross-practice collaborations have been prioritized and will be bolstered in 2012 and beyond. As noted above, the increasing investment in enshrining capacity development and overall systems-strengthening within Global Fund grants where UNDP is the IPR is already serving to facilitate the longer-term capacitating of national entities in programme implementation.

The significant progress on capacity development and the links between UNDP Global Fund work and its broader in-country human development work is well illustrated throughout the evaluation report. However, the report accurately shows that standard UNDP reporting does not adequately reflect all the progress in this area. In refining the ROAR, UNDP will strive for a more consistent, stronger way to capture these synergies and capacity development progress at the country level.

Key actions	Time frame	Responsible units	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Monitor and report on progress in project-level capacity development (including via the UNDP capacity development tracker) by global and vertical fund projects.	Annually.	UNDP-GEF, UNDP Montreal Protocol Unit (MLF), CDG, country offices		
2.2 Monitor and report on progress in project-level gender equity (including via the UNDP gender marker) by global and vertical fund projects.	Annually.	UNDP-GEF, UNDP Montreal Protocol Unit (MLF), CDG, gender team		
2.3 Refine the ROAR to enable reporting on the synergies between the work of the global and vertical funds and the broader human development agenda of UNDP.	Annually	OSG, BDP, regional bureaus		
2.4 Launch and disseminate the BDP HIV/AIDS group-CDG 'capacity development toolkit to strengthen national entities to implement national disease responses for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria'.	May 2012 and Ongoing	Global Fund, CDG, regional bureaus		
2.5 Monitor and report on progress in project-level capacity development by UNDP-managed Global Fund grants.	Annually	Global Fund, OSG, regional bureaus		

Evaluation recommendation 3. UNDP should focus on the role that partnership with global funds can play in securing development support to programme countries, particularly in the context of the rapidly changing international development cooperation architecture. It needs stronger central coordination of information and knowledge-management functions in order to facilitate a more strategic approach to partnership with global funds.

Management response

The UNDP vertical fund units are located within relevant UNDP thematic policy units so as to promote cross-linkages and synergies in thematic programming. However, UNDP vertical funds face an increasing number of similar operational issues – including environmental and social safeguards, fiduciary management, direct access, downward pressure on implementing fees, and difficulty in attracting, training and retaining highly specialized technical staff – linked to their common implementation service model. A greater operational coordination between fund units could lead to efficiencies and the harmonization of various operational systems.

As noted above, the UNDP-Global Fund Partnership is monitored by a high-level central coordinating body, the OPG, led by the Associate Administrator. The OPG brings all relevant parts of the organization together to agree on strategic directions for the partnership, including follow-up and actions to be taken by all concerned. Given the success of this business model in monitoring and driving Global Fund country implementation and strategic priorities for UNDP, it is suggested that the OPG could be the central coordination body for the other global funds as well, namely GEF and MLF, and that the OPG could complete the reviews sequentially. This would ensure and facilitate the systematic exchange of information and lessons across all the global funds managed by UNDP. It would also ensure greater support for diversification of funding (recommendation 1) and synergies in policy and programmatic work (recommendation 2) across the UNDP portfolio.

Key actions	Time frame	Responsible units	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
3,1 Continue to engage with regional bureaus in global and vertical fund programming.	Ongoing	UNDP-GEF; Global Fund		
3,2 Create a regular coordination mechanism between various UNDP global and vertical fund units and UNDP OPG.	August 2012 and biannually thereafter	Executive Office, UNDP-GEF, Global Fund, UNDP Montreal Protocol Unit (MLF), BDP		
3.3 Increase knowledge management, learning and communication on the programming and results of UNDP global and vertical fund units.	Ongoing	UNDP-GEF; UNDP Montreal Protocol Unit (MLF), Global Fund		

Evaluation recommendation 4. Building on ongoing BERA initiatives, UNDP should develop a partnership strategy for engagement with philanthropic foundations. Such a strategy should be built on a clear assessment of potential partners; on their motivations and goals; on potential benefits to UNDP programme countries; on UNDP value-added in engaging with such partners and the opportunities and risks in doing so.

Management response:

The new strategy for the UNDP engagement with philanthropic foundations aims to reposition the organization vis-à-vis the new developments in the philanthropic sector, and to embrace the new partnering opportunities. It focuses on the strategic collaboration for finding common solutions to development, and emphasizes mainstreaming sustainable human development. The strategy recognizes a wide range of cash and non-cash resources and assets that foundations offer and recognizes the new value proposition of foundations in international development. It outlines new collaboration models where foundations are positioned as development partners rather than donors, and offers space for working together in policy discussions, advocacy and problem analysis. Finally, it recognizes foundations as a source of valuable development knowledge.

Key action	Time frame	Responsible units	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
UNDP is developing a corporate strategy for engagement with philanthropic foundations.	June 2012	BERA, with inputs from all bureaus.		Final draft in preparation
Evaluation recommendation 5. UNDP has a particular responsibility in finding solutions to the operational and procedural bottlenecks, including issues relating to transparency and oversight, that plague relations with global funds and philanthropic foundations. UNDP should develop a communication strategy vis-à-vis global funds and philanthropic foundations that clarifies what can and cannot be done, so as to minimize clashes between bureaucratic cultures and expectations.				
Management response The evaluation suggests that cross-linkages at the project-level remain mixed and that some opportunities for an integrated approach to sustainable development may be missed. The new environmental and social safeguard screening procedure adopted by UNDP late 2011 should help to address some of these concerns, as it supports the identification of cross-linkages early in the project design phase. As the new procedure is incorporated into the UNDP POPP, UNDP must ensure that it becomes the centrepiece for a new streamlined UNDP policy framework rather than an additional programming burden. The UNDP Evaluation Office has finalized guidance on project terminal evaluations that aligns with the requirements of global and vertical funds, notably GEF. The adoption and implementation of the guidance should address the concern that global and vertical fund project evaluations are not routinely uploaded to the ERC. As noted in the evaluation, the UNDP Executive Board decided in June 2011 to share audit reports with some global and vertical funds. These include GEF and will likely include the Adaptation Fund. The initiative was well received by the global and vertical funds.				
Key actions	**Time frame**	**Responsible units**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**
5.1 In the context of the UNDP agenda for organizational change, continue to strengthen partnerships across policy and regional bureaus, including the different funds, to promote cross learning; strengthen monitoring and evaluation and quality assurance; identify synergies and efficiencies; streamline reporting procedures; and clarify accountability – all with a view to reducing confusion and burden at the country office level.	July 2012	UNDP-GEF, Global Fund, UNDP Montreal Protocol Unit (MLF), BDP, OSG, regional bureaus		
5.2 UNDP Executive Board to provide audit statements to GEF Council on a regular basis.	Ongoing			

5.3. Develop and implement a new UNDP policy framework incorporating the environmental and social safeguards policy.	End 2013	BDP; EEG		
54. Ensure that UNDP policies and procedures comply with the grievance and compliance elements of the GEF environmental and social safeguards policy.	End 2014	UNDP-GEF, BDP, OAI		

Abbreviations used in the annex

BDP – Bureau for Development Policy
BERA – Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy
CDG – capacity development group
EEG – environment and energy group
ERC – Evaluation Resource Centre
MLF – Multilateral Fund
OAI – Office of Audit and Investigations
OPG – organizational performance group
OSG – Operations Support Group
POPP – programme and operations policies and procedures
ROAR – results-oriented annual report
SGP – Small Grants Programme (of GEF)
IPR – interim principal recipient